

# Juan Franko

POEMS AND STORIES



Translated by JOHN WEIR



# IVAN FRANKO

## Poems and Stories

Ivan Franko was a Ukrainian poet, novelist, writer of short stories, playwright, satirist and publicist who lived and worked during the latter half of the 19th and the early years of the present century. His prolific and versatile pen left a great imprint on the people of his day as well as on the generations that followed. That is why today his name is honored and revered wherever Ukrainian people live.

As his writings were translated into more and more languages his world stature grew. Today he is recognized as one of the great writers of the past century.

Until now only a few of Ivan Franko's poems had been translated into English. The present volume of translations by John Weir is the first representative selection of the great writer's works in the English language. Since Franko's complete writings fill twenty volumes the translator has gathered here only a very modest sampling: some of his best known poems, a few of his many short stories and excerpts from three of his novels. A brief biography is also included.

This first book of Ivan Franko's writings in English translation has been published on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

340 PAGES. CLOTHBOUND

**\$3.50**

# IVAN FRANKO

Poems and Stories



IVAN FRANKO  
Poems and Stories



---

IVAN  
FRANKO

POEMS AND STORIES

TRANSLATED BY JOHN WEIR



PUBLISHED BY  
UKRAINSKA KNYHA  
TORONTO, CANADA

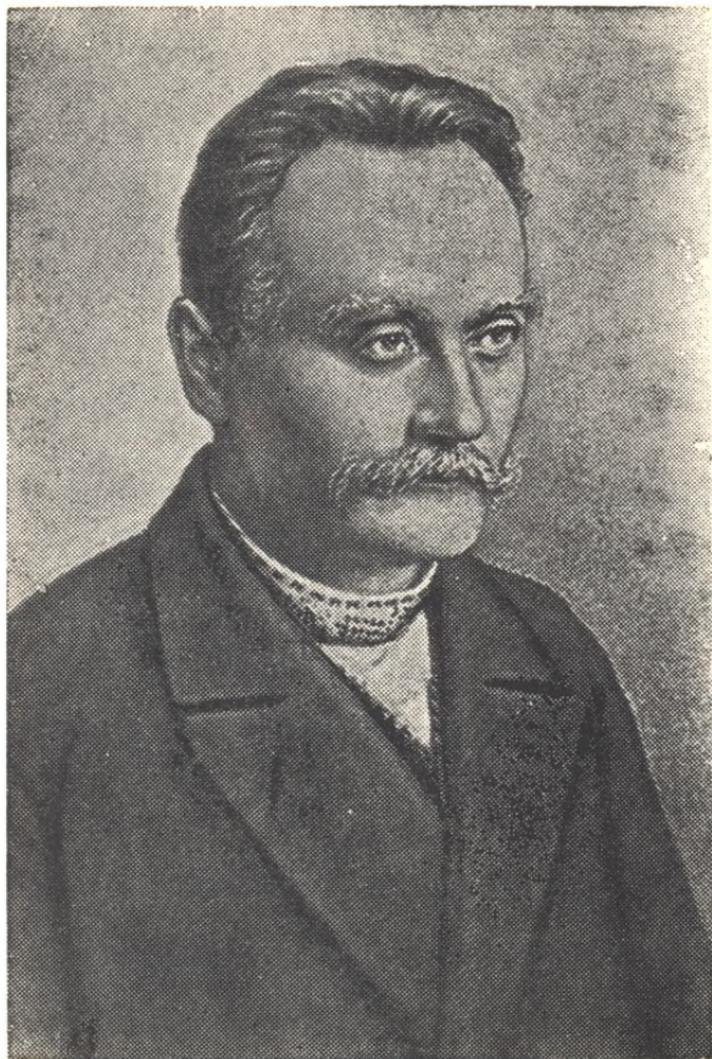
---

COPYRIGHT, 1956,  
BY  
UKRAINSKA KNYHA  
TORONTO, CANADA

FIRST CANADIAN EDITION  
MAY, 1956

PRINTED IN CANADA  
BY  
EVEREADY PRINTERS LIMITED  
TORONTO, ONTARIO





*IVAN FRANKO*  
*(1856-1916)*



## Foreword

THIS MODEST selection from the works of Ivan Franko is being issued on the 100th anniversary of the great Ukrainian democratic writer's birth.

It is being presented to the Ukrainians born in Canada (and the United States) who in most cases have lost fluency in the tongue of their ancestors and must therefore claim this part of their cultural heritage in the English language. And it is being presented to Canadians (and Americans) in general, both because it will help them to know their fellow-countrymen of Ukrainian origin better and because, like the great men of all nations, Ivan Franko belongs not only to the Ukrainians, but to all humanity.

In making our selections (out of the 20 volumes of Franko's writings) we were guided by two purposes:

1. To select not only such writings as provided samples of the style and genres in which Franko wrote, but particularly those which gave an exposition of his social views and therefore an idea of the impact he made on his people: an impact which he continues to exert long after he has passed away.

2. To select such writings as describe the past of the people of western Ukraine and the conditions there during the last half of the 19th and the first part of the 20th Century which drove so many of them from their ancestral hearths and hurled them across continents and oceans to seek a

better life. This should also provide more than an inkling to an understanding of the problems and forces that led to the re-unification of western and eastern Ukraine in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in our time.

We have also included in this volume a biographic study of Ivan Franko by John Weir.

All translations from the Ukrainian in this book are by John Weir, except for that poignant tale, "The Pencil," which was done by Helen Weir. Some of the translations here included have previously appeared in "The Ukrainian Canadian," "New Frontiers," and other publications.

# Contents

Foreword . . . . .	7
Translator's Notes . . . . .	11
Biographical Notes . . . . .	13
1. Citizen-Writer of Ukraine . . . . .	15
2. A Thousand Years of Sorrow . . . . .	19
3. Birth of a New Order . . . . .	23
4. Finding the Road Ahead . . . . .	27
5. The Steel Is Tempered . . . . .	31
6. Against the Stream . . . . .	35
7. Model of Patriotism . . . . .	39
8. Ties With Russia . . . . .	43
9. Paver of the Way . . . . .	46
10. Part of Our Tradition . . . . .	49
Poems	
Spirit of Revolt . . . . .	53
Pavers of the Way . . . . .	56
To the Comrades from Prison . . . . .	58

From the Prisoner's Dock . . . . .	60
Decree Against Famine . . . . .	62
A Parable About Foolishness . . . . .	63
The Emigrants . . . . .	66
The Fortune-Teller . . . . .	67
Zakhar Berkut . . . . .	69
Oleksa Dovbush Settles an Account . . . . .	93
A Tale About Prosperity . . . . .	107
Serf's Bread . . . . .	119
Forests and Pastures . . . . .	129
Budget of the Beasts . . . . .	145
Les's Widow's Household . . . . .	153
The Pencil . . . . .	169
Penmanship . . . . .	187
The Constitution for Pigs . . . . .	197
To the Light! . . . . .	209
The Plague . . . . .	231
Borislav Is Laughing . . . . .	275

## Translator's Notes

Translations in this book are from the 20 volumes of "Works of Ivan Franko", edited by O. E. Korneichuk, O. I. Biletsky, P. S. Kozlaniuk, D. D. Kopitsya and M. E. Omelyanovsky, and published by the State Publishers of Fine Literature in Kiev.

Source materials for the biographical notes included: "The History of Ukrainian Literature," published by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev in 1954; Mikhailo Kotsiubinsky's lecture on the life of Ivan Franko, delivered in 1908, included in the "Collected Social-Political and Philosophic Works of Ukrainian Revolutionary Democrats of the XIX Century," published by the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., in Moscow in 1955; M. S. Voznyak's "From the Life and Works of Ivan Franko," published in Kiev in 1955; Yuri Kobiletsky's "Poetic Works of Ivan Franko," G. Sidorenko's introduction to "Publicist Works of Ivan Franko," Yevgen Kiriliuk's introduction to "Selected Works of Ivan Franko," M. Tarnovsky's "To the Great Kamenyar of the Ukrainian People," published in New York in 1941; articles in the Canadian press by Peter Krawchuk and others.

In translating Franko's writings great care was taken to keep strictly to the letter and spirit of the original, although this has not always been absolutely possible. Nevertheless, it is felt that this translation is free of downright perversions of the original as has been the case in some other translations. Where a word would obviate lengthy explanations and would not in any way change the

author's meaning, the word has been added (this liberty has been taken in only a few rare instances). In cases where the translation is an excerpt from or a condensation of the original, this is stated in the introduction.

Although a retention of Ukrainian words in the English text may have added "colour" to it, this was kept down to the minimum, so that a glossary of words should not be necessary. A boyar was a feudal baron, a trembita is a shawn—a musical instrument of the Hutsuls and Boykos (Carpathian mountaineers), a kopa was a tribal emblem, a smerd was a helot in Kievan Rus, a voyevoda in the olden times was a governor of a province.

It should also be noted that an Austrian mile was several times longer than is ours.

Wherever Rus refers to the ancient Rus state, the name is left, of course, but where Franko was referring to Ukraine the name has been changed accordingly.

In several instances Franko speaks of "keeping the Jew out of the village," — this means prevention of the establishment in the village of an inn with sale of alcoholic beverages.

Where the spelling and pronunciation of Ukrainian place names, which have already acquired "citizenship" in English, are different from the original Ukrainian, we have used that version which is already accepted in English: Galicia instead of Halichina, Lvov instead of Lviv, Kharkov instead of Kharkiv, Carpathians instead of Karpati, etc. We feel that our Ukrainian dignity does not demand a fight for a change in this regard any more than England should try to force the French to drop Londres for London, or the Finns should declare war on us for calling their country Finland instead of Suomi.

In translating Ukrainian and Russian names an attempt was made to reproduce in English the sound closest to the original, avoiding the acrobatics indulged in by some Ukrainians on this side of the Atlantic, who scramble together German, Polish and who knows what other kind of spelling, until a completely unrecognizable and unpronounceable hash is produced. In cases of Polish and other names where the original was in the Latin alphabet, wherever it could be checked that original was preserved.

We will be deeply grateful if the readers will bring any faults or errors to our attention.

## Biographical Notes



## 1. Citizen-Writer of Ukraine

*I thought of the new human brotherhood's birth,  
And wondered: how soon will it come to the earth?  
I saw in a vision the vast, fertile fields  
Worked jointly, providing magnificent yields,  
Supporting the people in freedom and bounty.  
Can this the Ukraine be, my own native country,  
Which once was forsaken, the conqueror's prey?  
Yes, that is indeed the Ukraine, new and free!  
I gazed, and the ache in my heart ebbed away.*

—IVAN FRANKO

IN THAT VERSE, written in 1881, Ivan Franko summed up his outlook as a writer and a citizen. And Ivan Franko was one of the great citizen-writers of the world, one of that glorious group — and they are found in all lands — whose pen is a sword wielded in the battle for the welfare and future of their own people and of all mankind.

The Ukrainian people are fortunate in this regard. Their great poets and writers wrote for the masses, and not for some elite, and they roused those masses to struggle for liberty, not in the abstract, but for their own liberty in their own time. They were patriots and revolutionaries, or rather, they were patriot-revolutionaries, for they viewed the na-

tional liberation and social emancipation of the Ukrainian people as a single historical process.

That is not to say that there weren't the other kind among the Ukrainian writers. There were! There were sycophants, licking the bloodstained hands of the oppressors of their own Ukrainian people. There were cosmopolitans, glorifying foreign ways, no matter how shabby, and running down everything Ukrainian. There were chauvinists, preaching hatred of other peoples and striving to identify the Ukrainian nation with the outlook and interests of the tightfisted, narrowminded and hardhearted new moneyed class. There were ivory towerists, escapists, decadents, futurists . . .

But these caused hardly a ripple on the national consciousness and they have slipped into oblivion, while Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko and the other Ukrainian citizen-writers and poets — M. Kotsiubinsky, Lessya Ukrainka, P. Grabovsky, Panas Mirny, V. Stefanik and others — are loved and honoured by the people more than is the case with writers in most other nations.

The Ukraine has produced outstanding statesmen, warriors, thinkers, scientists, cultural leaders, revolutionaries, heroes and martyrs. But in the 19th Century, when Ukraine lay prostrate under the heels of foreign rulers and her people were robbed and trampled into the mud by both alien and homegrown exploiters, when the powers-that-be decreed that there was no such thing as the Ukraine, the Ukrainian nation or the Ukrainian language, and that the people were doomed to eternal slavery and degradation, Ukraine's poets and writers stepped out on the stage. They became the statesmen of their then stateless country, the revolutionaries who called on their people to rise in their millions to the struggle for freedom, the prophets, martyrs, symbols and leaders of the Ukrainian popular masses.

That's why they were and are today held in such exceptional esteem.

Today, of course, Ukraine and the Ukrainians are gen-



*IVAN FRANKO (Wood-cut by Vasil Kassian)*

erally known throughout the world; they have taken — even if belatedly, sometimes grudgingly and in some cases insufficiently and wrongly, as in our Canadian textbooks — their proper place in geography, in history, in the arts and sciences, and in the affairs of the nations of the globe. With a population of nearly 45 million, Ukraine is one of the large nations of Europe. She is today a great industrial power as well as a great agricultural country. She is a prominent member of the United Nations . . . And yet only 50 years ago not only was Ukraine unknown to the world at large, but even large sections of Ukrainians themselves knew little of their land and nationality!

Four generations ago the Ukrainian masses were still serfs. Today they are citizens of a socialist society. The compression of history in these hundred years past and the sweep and dynamics of that century of history are beyond anything that the western nations ever experienced.

Ivan Franko helped to fashion this modern history of his people.

## 2. A Thousand Years of Sorrow

*The Rus women lamented.*

—ANCIENT CHRONICLE

*When did not your tears flow in all of our story,  
Oh ye Ukrainian women?  
When nomads harassed, when Princedom was in glory,  
In times of Cossacks, Poles, serfdom, Tatar forays  
Your eyes were ever brimming!*

*Oh, how many hearts in the breaking lamented,  
How many withered in horror!  
But some put their grief into words sad and tender  
And thus into songs that are deathless they rendered  
A thousand years of sorrow!*

*So sad are your songs, oh my sisters, I listen  
And darkly ponder the question:  
How many heartbreaks and what wrongs not forgiven,  
What torrents of tears through the ages were given  
One song like that to fashion?*

—IVAN FRANKO

LAVED BY THE BLACK SEA in the south, stretching to the Don steppes in the east and the Bryansk forests and Byelorussian marshes in the north, and reaching across the

Carpathian Mountains in the west, Ukraine is a big country and it has a long and proud history.

The ancestors of the Ukrainians lived in that territory from time immemorial. Five thousand years ago there already existed agricultural settlements on that land. Fifteen hundred years ago there were walled towns and trading centres. A thousand years ago Kiev was the centre of the Rus state, stretching from the Caucasus to the Balkans and from the Black Sea to the Baltic, which challenged Byzantium in power, wealth and civilization. The Eastern Slavs at that time were as yet one people, the Rus, and it was only some centuries later that they branched out into the modern Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian nations.

True, invasions by Polovetsian and other nomadic tribes from Asia and the growing burden of feudalism and feudal wars lay heavily on the backs of the people even then. But it took the Mongol invasions of the 13th Century to fill their cup of suffering to the brim. Torn and weakened by rivalries of the feudal princes, Kieven Rus fell, despite the heroic defense put up by the people. Two centuries of ruination and savage Mongol-Tatar oppressions followed. And by the time a new Rus centre was formed, now at Moscow in the north, and gathered enough strength to expel the Mongols (at the same time establishing the new Russian state and nation), the territories of Ukraine and Byelorussia had been seized by the Polish-Lithuanian state. Gradually the Polish feudal lords established their sway, first over Galicia and Volin, later over all of Ukraine, adding national and religious persecution to unbearable feudal exactions, while the Crimea and the Black Sea coast were held by the Tatars, remnants of the Golden Horde, who by this time were vassals of the Turkish Sultan.

The unceasing struggle of the Ukrainian people against the yoke of the Polish feudal lords (with whom the large Ukrainian landowners merged) was to receive the help of a people's army — the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Out of volunteer detachments of fighters against the Turks and Tatars on

the "free steppe," formed by runaway serfs and tolerated and used by the Polish state for its own protection, this amazing Cossack army grew up and at a vital time linked up with the mass uprisings of the serfs to wage a war of liberation from the Polish feudal masters. Under the leadership of the great hetman, Bogdan Khmelnytsky, a large part of Ukraine was freed and at the Rada (Council) of Pereyaslav in 1654 it was united to Russia (re-united, rather, for they had formed one state before the Mongol conquest), Ukraine being guaranteed autonomy within the Russian state. This pledge was later repudiated by the Tsars and national repression was added to the feudal burdens and absolutist tyranny.

In the meantime, the western half of Ukraine remained under the even more onerous yoke of the Polish nobility. When Poland itself was finally partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria, the Ukrainian provinces of eastern Galicia and Bukovina were annexed to Austro-Hungary (1772-74), the Trans-Carpathian district having been annexed to Hungary much earlier. Thus Galicia became an Austrian province, the Polish nobility sticking to it like leeches nevertheless.

The struggles of the people for their liberty never ceased. And in the first half of the 19th Century a figure of giant stature arose in Ukraine, Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), who was to inspire his people to "baptize their freedom with the evil blood of tyrants," to overthrow the feudal order and Tsarism and to build a new Ukraine "in the family new and free."

A serf of Baron Englehardt until he was 24 years of age, when he was bought out of bondage by the foremost painters and writers in St. Petersburg (where his master had taken him as a house-servant), the brilliant Ukrainian artist, poet and revolutionary democrat, while he also wrote many works in Russian, penned his immortal poetry in the tongue of his own people and those works became the foundation of the literary Ukrainian language of today. Shevchenko

was sent to prison and exile for his democratic writings and anti-Tsarist activities, he suffered ten years of inhuman punishment, but he kept writing to the last day of his life, rousing his people to fight for freedom.

The spirit of Taras Shevchenko illuminated the whole century of the struggles of the Ukrainian people and shines more brightly with every year that passes.

Ivan Franko continued his mission in the new period of history that came with the abolition of serfdom.



*TARAS SHEVCHENKO*

### 3. Birth of a New Order

*I'm peasant born, son of the working people  
That's going up, though 'twas in dungeon locked.  
My slogan's: labour, happiness and freedom.  
I am the prologue, not the epilogue.*

—IVAN FRANKO.

WHEN THE VOICE of Taras Shevchenko, the Bard of Ukraine, was stilled by death in 1861, in "the other Ukraine," that which nestled up to the Carpathian Mountains and had for many centuries been torn away from its motherland, a five-year-old boy, who was to become second only to Taras in the hearts of his countrymen, listened wide-eyed in a corner of a village smithy to the stories his father told his cronies that dropped in for a chat, stories of the people's tribulations, fairy tales peopled with wondrous beings and replete with magic happenings, sage peasant philosophical observations, perhaps verses from Shevchenko's "Kobzar" that had seeped across the Russo-Austrian border that cut Ukraine in two.

Ivan Franko was born on August 27th, 1856, in the village of Nahuyevichi, county of Drohobich, province of Galicia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. His father was a peasant who was also the village blacksmith. Thus the lad

from his earliest years knew both farming and artisan work, while with the opening of the Borislav oil-fields nearby he could also observe the emergence of the new class of wage-workers.

Taras Shevchenko had been born a serf and died before the edict abolishing serfdom in Russia was proclaimed. The genius of Shevchenko, who had devoted his whole life to the struggle for the abolition of serfdom and the autocracy, was at no time more clearly demonstrated than at the moment when he saw his first steam engine and understood that this technological revolution would inevitably bring in its train a political and social revolution.

Ivan Franko lived in the Austro-Hungarian empire, where the popular risings of 1848 and the defeat suffered at the hands of Prussia in 1867 had forced the Habsburg monarchy to renounce serfdom and grant certain concessions (in order to maintain its rule), and so the transition to the new capitalist relations was taking place along with the retention of as many as possible of the old feudal ways of life.

The peasants were no longer serfs, although many of them still remembered and bore the scars of serfdom. They were free now. But the bulk of the land remained in the hands of the big landowners. The little plots which the farmers received for their own were barely enough to sustain life. Moreover, they had to pay compensation for their liberty. Actually, they still worked the landlords' estates, but now for a pittance wage, and the landlords were no longer obliged to see to it that they didn't starve to death between harvests. Soon many of them lost their plots and became full-time hired men. or went begging. . . . Ivan Franko was later to set down the bitter saying that was current among the peasants:

"We survived serfdom, and somehow we'll manage to survive the constitution!" (The constitution meant the liberation of the serfs.)

In that cruel and fantastic set-up that was the Austro-Hungarian empire, the provinces settled by Ukrainians (Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina and Trans-Carpathia)

were kept poor and backward, treated as a colony of the ruling nations. And in order to keep this many-nationed house of cards from falling apart, a cynical and elaborate system of "divide and rule" was built up, using one nationality against the other while piously proclaiming "cultural autonomy" and "harmony between the nations." Thus the Habsburgs gave privileges to the big Polish landowners over the Ukrainians in Galicia, the same with the Hungarians in regard to the Slovaks and Trans-Carpathian Ukrainians, the same among the Southern Slavs that were in the empire. On the other hand they sought to exploit the natural hatred of the Ukrainians for their Polish, Hungarian and Austrian oppressors to suppress the democratic forces in Vienna, Budapest or Cracow.

Government policy was against the development of industry in Galicia. Except for the primary industries, such as the cutting down of the forests in the Carpathians and the digging for oil, the province remained an area of the most backward agriculture and petty artisan workshops, as in the Middle Ages. And as for the timber and the oil—the logs were cut and the oil barreled for transportation to other, more favoured parts of the empire, and for lucrative export abroad.

For all its show of strength, for all the seeming success of its "divide and rule" policy, the Austro-Hungarian empire was entering the period of growing crisis and ultimate dissolution. And in the second half of the 19th Century a new force had come on the world stage — the industrial working class and the socialist movement, which were to become the main social force in the 20th Century, undertaking the task of transforming human society altogether.

It was as the harbinger of socialism that Ivan Franko considered himself to be "the prologue," the forerunner of a New Age.



*Ivan Franko as a young man (1875).*

## 4. Finding the Road Ahead

*It may be, in a ditch somewhere  
Alone I'll end my days,  
And like the dew when day is here,  
My dreams and deeds will disappear  
Without a trace!*

*It may be so! And yet with joy  
Into the fray I go!  
For truth and right I'll gladly die  
And proudly to the last hold high  
My banner whole!*

—IVAN FRANKO

JUST LIKE Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko came out of the very mass of the common people and his own experiences from boyhood on helped to set his feet on the road of social consciousness and struggle in behalf of the people.

His father, Yakiv, was a good workman and a good man generally. He was a man of progressive views and it is certain that little Ivan got his first social impulses from listening to his father — it was to him that he dedicated his first collection of verses, and time and again he likens the work of public enlightenment to a smithy, as in the following:

*The village in a valley lies,  
And mists above the village rise,  
While beyond it, on a height,  
Stands a smithy big and bright.*

*There's a blacksmith in that smithy,  
Warm of heart and quick to pity;  
As to steel his hammer rings  
This the song he loudly sings:*

*"Here from field and home foregather!  
Better life we'll forge together  
In this smithy—don't delay,  
Lest the mist befog your way!"*

*But the fog is rolling quicker,  
And the fog is growing thicker,  
Spreading fast on every side  
To conceal the path from sight.*

*To conceal the path, ascending  
To the smithy, where unending  
Toils the smith with might and main,  
Forging arms instead of chains.*

When Ivan was six years old his father sent him to school in a neighboring village. Education in Galicia at that time was in the Polish and German languages and was mainly promoted with the aid of the cane. Moreover, any "mouzhik" child that ventured to go to school was fair game for both the brutal teachers and his classmates of "better birth."

The prominent Ukrainian writer, Mikhailo Kotsiubinsky, described Ivan Franko's schooldays thus:

"Notwithstanding everything, the extraordinarily gifted child learned to read Ukrainian, Polish and German in that village school. After two years his father sent him to the German common school, conducted in a monastery in the town of Drohobich. The frightened village child, unkempt and poorly clothed, became the prey of the pupils and of



*Ivan Franko with two of his colleagues, the Ukrainian writer M. Kotsiubinsky (left) and the ethnologist V. Hnatiuk.*

the rude, ignorant teachers. They beat him and ridiculed him. Franko described the barbarism of the teachers in his stories "Schon Schreiben" and "The Pencil," which are of an autobiographical nature. And already at that time eternal hatred of all oppression and tyranny, of man's violence to man, was born in Franko's childish heart. A year passed, along came the examinations — and little Franko amazed everybody: he proved to be at the top of the class.

"Soon after that, Franko's father died and his mother married again. But though the family became poorer, without the affluence that existed when his father was alive, he was not taken out of school. In town he lived with a relative, a cabinet maker, where he listened to the talk of working folk, learned songs, slept on an empty crate which had been prepared for the market or in a coffin, and helped with the work. When summer holidays came he went back to the village, where he helped to make hay in the field and to bring in the harvest again.

"Three years later Franko was sent to the gimnazia (secondary school — *J.W.*). There, too, the mouzhik's son went through the same experiences as at the primary school. They paid Franko no attention, he sat the entire term out in a corner on 'the donkey's bench' and dug holes in the walls with his fingers. And then he again took top honours in the studies and stayed at the top during his entire course at the gimnazia."

It was a hard school and from it Ivan Franko learned more than was on the curriculum.

He chose his road early and he never left it.

## 5. The Steel Is Tempered

*O Mother Earth, of all life the creator,  
Some of the strength that is stored in your deep  
So that in battle my staunchness be greater  
Give unto me!*

*Give me the warmth which the breast fills to bursting,  
Cleanses the senses, makes youthful again,  
Love and devotion to mankind sends coursing,  
Hot through the veins!*

*Give me the fire that turns words into torches,  
Fire that can sear people's souls give to me,  
Fire that serves truth and injustices scorches,  
Passion's white heat!*

*Strength for my hands to break shackles I pray for,  
Clearness of mind — that my aim should be right,  
Ever to labour and labour and labour —  
Die in the fight!*

IVAN FRANKO

ALTHOUGH HE WAS a very good student, Ivan Franko did not like school. He was getting his real education outside the classroom. The world of books was now open to him, and he read voraciously.

Even as a mere lad he had learned Shevchenko's "Kobzar" practically all by heart. He read Panas Mirny and other Ukrainian authors. And also from boyhood he began to collect Ukrainian folklore, proverbs, tales, folk songs — he wrote down more than 800 songs from his native village and the neighboring region alone. And beginning with 1868, when he was twelve years old, he himself began to try his own skill at writing.

Mikhailo Kotsiubinsky relates:

"His first efforts to write, both verse and prose, go back to the time when Franko was in the gimnazia. At that time, too, he had already begun to collect folk songs. When the young Franko left for Lvov University in 1875, he had everything in his literary baggage: love poems, plays, novels and translations of Sophocles, Homer, Gutzkow's 'Uriel Acosta,' the Kraledvor Chronicle, etc.

"In Lvov the nineteen-year-old student joined the student circle and took a lively part in editing the student magazine 'Friend,' in which Franko's first verses had been published in 1874 under the pen-name of Jedjalik."

The rising ferment in Galicia itself, the impact of the revolutionary ideas and struggles in Russia and the workers' and socialist movements of Western Europe all contributed to the formation of the young man's world outlook.

"The struggle of the working people of Galicia against their oppressors increased in the second half of the 19th Century," relates the authoritative "History of Ukrainian Literature" (Kiev, 1954). "The landlessness of the peasants and the artificial retarding of the development of industry caused famine and unemployment in the province. Already in the 1870's a wave of workers' strikes swept through the Galician cities, and in the 1880's and 1890's the peasant rallies at times took on the character of popular protests against social enslavement. The liberation movement also began among the other Slavic nations of Austro-Hungary.

“The influence of the works of Shevchenko and of the Russian revolutionary democrats — Belinsky, Hertsen, Chernishevsky, Dobrolyubov, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin — and the propagation of socialist ideals among the masses of workers and peasants in the conditions of the rise of the liberation movement inevitably could not fail to give rise to such political thought in Galicia, which would be directed not only against the official imperial ideology, but also against bourgeois liberalism. Revolutionary-democratic and Marxist literature was widely disseminated in Galicia in the 1870’s. Thus, among the books seized from Franko, Pavlik, Terletsky and others, who were put on trial in 1877, there were various editions of the works of Marx and Engels, pamphlets by Lasalle, the works of Hertsen and Dobrolyubov, Chernishevsky’s novel ‘What Is To Be Done,’ Pyotr Alekseyev’s speech at the ‘trial of the 50’ in 1877, the poetry of Shevchenko and Nekrasov, the works of Mikhailov, Mirny’s novel ‘Bad People,’ and poems by Heine and Potier.”

Ivan Franko now had access to the literary gems and foremost ideas of all the advanced countries—he was proficient in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Czech, German, Bulgarian, French and other languages. He attended workers’ discussion groups. And he was in the very centre of student activities where debates and study of social questions was at fever pitch.

It was in hot polemics with the “Populist” and the “Muscophile” trends among the Galician intellectuals (the “Populists” sought little favours for themselves from the Austrian emperor, while the “Muscophiles” orientated themselves on the Russian Tsar, both were conservative and contemptuous of the Ukrainian common people) that Ivan Franko and the group which he led forged their social views, tried out their youthful pens, set their feet on the road of political struggle.

The Galician reactionaries were troubled by these “insane” young people, who were attacking their positions.

They informed on them to the Austrian authorities, and in 1877 Ivan Franko and other members of the editorial board of the student magazine "Friend" were arrested and charged with "subversive" activities and the "propagation of socialism." After seven months in jail awaiting trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment . . . the time he had already spent in jail didn't count.

That was his first baptism under fire.

## 6. Against the Stream

*Boldly 'gainst the current  
Swim the stream across;  
Till you die, with courage  
Bear the heavy cross . . .*

IVAN FRANKO

“THIS SENSELESS CASE,” Franko wrote of his first imprisonment, “which hit me like a brick falling suddenly on my head in the middle of the street, and which ended by me being sentenced, although I was not in the slightest degree guilty of what I was charged with (there were no secret societies or socialism; as a mouzhik I was sympathetic to socialism, but I was far from understanding what scientific socialism was), was a terrible and difficult test for me. The nine months I spent in jail were torture. I was treated as a common criminal, locked up by myself with thieves and vagabonds, of whom there often were as many as 14 to 18 in the same cell with me, constantly transferred from cell to cell, with endless searches and persecutions (that was, you see, because I ‘wrote’ — that is, with an accidentally acquired pencil on accidentally secured bits of paper I jotted down songs and sayings from the lips of prisoners and my own verses), and I spent several weeks in a cell that had only one window and was occupied by

12 men, eight of whom slept on a bench and four under the bench for lack of room. As a favour, to give me fresh air, the prisoners allotted me the "choicest" sleeping spot — underneath the window and opposite the door — and as the window had to be kept open day and night because of the stuffiness, and there was a draft to the door, every morning I would awaken with my head covered with snow, blown in through the window."

Ivan Franko passed that test courageously and was able to write:

*Do not fear jail, oh youthful friends of mine!  
Don't fear those chains that for a little while  
Like cold, black snakes your body weak entwine.*

\* \* \*

*That stupid prison, weak though made of stone,  
Just shows the rulers' fear and lets us know  
Their power's weak just as those walls are dumb.*

But on his release he had to face an even more severe test. The Polish and Ukrainian "nationalists" hounded him (he was expelled from "Prosvita," barred from "Besida"), while many former friends shunned him — only the small youth group proudly rallied around him. But Franko was not dismayed: he plunged immediately into literary and socialist activity, even while he continued to attend lectures at the University. As told in the "History of Ukrainian Literature":

"Prison did not break Franko, but to the contrary, he began to take a still more active part in the Galician labour and socialist movement. He became a member of the Workers' Committee and the editor of the workers' paper 'Labour,' which was published in the Polish language; he became acquainted with the mode of life and conditions of the workers of Lvov, Drohobich and Borislav; he conducted propaganda work in workers' self-education circles, where he lectured on political economy; he prepared a popular textbook on political economy, based on the works

of Marx and also Chernishevsky and Mill; in 1878 he wrote an agitational pamphlet in Polish, 'The Catechism of Economic Socialism' . . .

"Together with Pavlik, Franko published the magazine 'Community Friend' (1878). Following the confiscation of the first two issues, the name was changed to 'The Bell,' and later to 'The Hammer,' but those issues were also confiscated. In the magazine 'The Hammer' Franko wrote an article titled 'Literature, Its Tasks and Most Important Parts,' directed against the nationalistic views of the 'Populist' organ 'Truth' . . .

"During these years Franko wrote several stories from the life of the Borislav workmen and the novel "Boa-Constrictor."

"The writer studied and translated works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. He translated the section, 'The Primitive Accumulation of Capital' from Marx's 'Capital' and the 'Introduction' and the first and second chapters of the section, 'Socialism' from Engels' 'Anti-Duehring'."

At this time, too, he translated poems by Heine, Goethe's "Faust," Byron's "Cain," Shelley, Robert Burns and others.

And then, in 1880, he was arrested again and sentenced to three months in jail. He fell seriously ill, yet on his release a gendarme drove him on foot to his native village. For a week he lay burning up with fever and then he set out for Kolomeya, where he put up at an inn, lived for three days on three pennies he had found, locked himself in his room to die — and wrote 'In the Depths,' a scathing indictment of Drohobich prison life. A friend found and rescued him, taking him to his place in a near-by village to recuperate, but the police located him there and drove the sick young man again on foot to the city (he later related that the toenails on both his feet fell off as a result of that pilgrimage) only to find that he wasn't wanted by the authorities and let him go.

Franko returned to Lvov and took up his literary and socialist activities, writing the first program of the East-

ern Galician socialists, contributing to many journals. Poverty forced him to leave the city for a time and live in the village. Twice he journeyed to Kiev in an effort to get financial support for starting a magazine. It was in Kiev that he got married, and soon he had a young family to support, while his means did not get any bigger. He was compelled to work in publications whose views he did not share in order to earn a livelihood.

In 1889, he was once again arrested, along with a group of Kiev students who had come to Galicia on a holiday excursion. This time he was charged with conspiracy to tear Galicia away from Austria and join it to Russia and he spent another two and a half months in jail.

While he had received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Vienna and delivered a masterly thesis on Taras Shevchenko's poem "The Hired Girl" at the Lvov University, he couldn't get a teacher's position in his native province. The man who himself was the greatest living Ukrainian writer was not permitted to teach Ukrainian literature . . . and yet his service to that literature was so great that he was elected to membership in the St. Petersburg and Prague Academies of Science and given an honorary degree by the Kharkov University.

Three times he was put up as a candidate in elections, both to the Austrian Reichsrat (parliament) and the Galician seym (provincial legislature), but his election was prevented by terrorism, bribery and trickery.

His indefatigable labours, privations and sufferings had undermined his health, and from 1908 on he was a very sick man, but he kept working to the very end, even when he was practically blind and almost paralyzed. He died on May 28th, 1916, while the First World War was raging about him.

Ivan Franko was buried in the Lichakiv cemetery in Lvov.

## 7. Model of Patriotism

*And how can this love contradict  
That other sacred tenderness  
To all who shed their blood and sweat  
To all who toil and are oppressed?*

IVAN FRANKO

FRANKO NOT ONLY did not see any contradiction between patriotism and internationalism, but he couldn't see the fulfilment of the one without the other. More than that, he subordinated the national to the social ideal.

"I have always put the main emphasis on winning general human rights," he said at the testimonial gathering, marking twenty-five years of his literary activity, "because I knew that the people, by winning general human rights for themselves, would at the same time attain their national rights as well."

He rejected loyalty to everything Ukrainian, to the Ukrainian upper strata that were riding on the backs of the workers and peasants, to all things that were reactionary.

"As a peasant's son," he said, "reared on black mouzhik bread, I have felt it my duty to devote my life's work to that common people."

Ivan Franko poured vials of wrath and contempt on those "patriots," who "love Rus (Ukraine — J.W.) like

beer and a hunk of pork fat," recalling Shevchenko's similar scornful reference to those "who love not their brothers, but the skin on their brother's backs." In one of his satirical poems Franko depicts a "patriotic" priest turning away a starving boy from his door and telling him to seek alms from the Jewish innkeeper, yet admonishing him "to always be a good Ukrainian."

When Franko entered the literary and political scene, there were two main trends among the Galician intellectuals: the Populists and the Muscophiles. The people still called themselves Rusins, the ancient name from the times of the Kievan Rus (the Latinized version "Ruthenians" was even carried over to America by the Greek Catholic clergy), and they felt their kinship with their fellow-Ukrainians in the Ukraine (the word *Ukraina*, meaning Border Land, was originally applied only to a section of Ukraine, only later came to apply to all territories inhabited by Ukrainians) and also with the Russians.

The Muscophile trend was an agency of Russian Tsarism. The Muscophiles tried to make Russian the literary tongue of Galicia — their "Russian" was actually an unholy mixture of Russian, Old Church Slavonic and local dialect — and they propagated the most reactionary of Tsarist Russian ideas.

The Populist trend (forerunner of the "Ukrainian nationalist" movement) was in actuality an agency of the Austrian Empire. While allegedly "fighting" for "national rights," the Populists were seeking personal and class privileges for themselves, the right to take part in ruling over the Ukrainian masses in Galicia, and "soft" and lucrative posts in the elaborate Austrian imperial state set-up. They propagated hatred of Russia and all things Russian, and narrow chauvinism towards the Poles and the Jews. Their anti-Polish position, however, did not prevent them from lining up with the Polish landowners against the radicalism of the working people.

Ivan Franko combatted both those tendencies.

Basing himself on the Ukrainian working people and



*IVAN FRANKO (1913)*

democratic circles, he found allies among the same sort of working people and democratic forces among the Poles and the Jews in Galicia, among the Russian revolutionaries and the European socialists.

Franko decisively rejected the propaganda that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was supposedly more progressive and democratic than Russia. He wrote:

*A slimy, fetid slough among the powers  
Of Europe, you're a vile abomination!  
Stupidity you spawn and foul stagnation,  
O Austria! Where you set foot, there flower*

*Hypocrisy and soullessness and plunder,  
The people are delivered to the vultures.  
As you oppress, "I freedom bring!" you thunder.  
You skin the people, crying: "I bring culture!"*

*You do not flog or to Siberia drive,  
Just vampire-like you suck the sap of life  
And all that's good in people's hearts you murder.*

*Here nothing thrives, but filth and snakes and vermin,  
The spirit free must flee across the border  
Or in your tomb is doomed to live interment.*

Franko likened the "enlightened" Austrian policy of setting her subject nationalities at each other's throats to hobbles set by a herdsman on his horses, tying them together by one foot each, so that "while three feet are free, they can neither walk nor run."

He viewed the future of Galicia in re-unification with the Ukrainian people across the border, which would come with the downfall of Tsarism in Russia. He corrected his own writings to bring them as close as possible to the language of Shevchenko, to the literary Ukrainian.

Ivan Franko, an ardent internationalist, was a consistent Ukrainian patriot.

## 8. Ties With Russia

*O Russia, land of merciless extremes!  
Your Svyatogor lies drowsing in his cave,  
And on the steppes your Cossack freedom dreams,  
But on a city street a lassie waves  
Her kerchief—thus the modern falcon-knight  
The signal gives to bloodshed and the fight.*

—IVAN FRANKO

AS IN AGES PAST, so in modern times the fate of Ukraine is closely tied to Russia. This is the touchstone of Ukrainian national policy. And on this central question Ivan Franko took a realistic, principled stand.

“Of course,” he wrote in a polemic against the “nationalist” viewpoint, “the Russian state, with its gendarmes and officials and their suppression of all free thought, is one thing, while the Russian literature with its Gogols, Belinskys, Turgenyevs, Dobrolyubovs, Pisarevs, Shchapovs, Reshetnikovs and Nekrasovs, is an entirely different matter.”

And he noted that the Ukrainian “anti-Russian” nationalists attacked not the Russian Tsarist state . . . but the embattled Russian democrats!

“If the European literary works appealed to us, and excited our aesthetic taste and our imagination,” he wrote, “then the works of the Russians tortured us, awakened our

conscience, awakened the human being in us, awakened love for the poor and the wronged."

And he pointed out these "well-known facts and conditions" — "that the majority of Ukrainians live in Russia, directly bound to the Russian people, and that this Russian people created a powerful state, upon which the eyes of all Slavdom are turned in one way or another, that this state embraces Galician Ukraine from two sides, and that this Russian people created a spiritual, literary and scientific life which by a thousand ways also exerts an influence on Ukraine and on us."

And when the Muscophiles accused the Galician Ukrainians of "anti-Russianism" because they opposed Russian Tsarism and because they proclaimed their Ukrainian national identity, Franko replied:

"We are all Russophiles; listen, I repeat again: we are all Russophiles. We love the Great Russian people and wish them everything good, we love and we learn their language."

It is from that standpoint that Franko evaluated Shevchenko not only as a fighter for Ukrainian freedom, but for Russian freedom too:

"He suffered ten years at the hands of the Russian military, but he did more for the liberty of Russia than ten victorious armies."

Franko not only envisioned the future of Galicia in re-union with Ukraine, but the future of Ukraine in re-unification with Russia. "The political independence of Ukraine is possible in union with Russia as well," he wrote, "given a federal structure—and the economy of Ukraine necessitates such unity."

"The socialist ideal," he pointed out, "is after all directed to the closest possible fraternization (federation) of people with people and nations with nations, free among the free and equal among equals."

An opponent of Pan-Slavism, which was an agency of Russian Tsarism, Ivan Franko understood the deep feeling of Slavic solidarity and the role it could play for the progress of humanity. "Shevchenko's Slavophilism," he noted, "was

never either racist or confessional. Shevchenko did not love the Slavs only because they are Slavs. . . . He brought forward only those features from the past of the Slavs, where the Slavs (individuals) made their contribution to the storehouse of general human civilization.”

Ivan Franko foresaw, approved and helped to advance the course of history.

## 9. Paver of the Way

*It was odd, winter thought, that the flowers should dare  
Lift their delicate heads from the snow to the air.  
From his icicle lips freezing whirlwinds he blew  
And he piled the snow thick, stack by stack, on the blooms.  
Though the flowers bent down, sadly pressed to their beds,  
When the blizzard was spent, they again raised their heads.  
And the winter can't fathom why, do what he will,  
He has not got the power wee flowers to kill.*

—IVAN FRANKO

FRANKO CONCEIVED his life's task to lie in breaking down the stone wall of ignorance and privilege, to take the full blast of the winter of the old order, to persistently and all-sidedly work at paving the way for social progress. To this duty he devoted all his life and all his talents.

It is difficult in this brief sketch to present the full figure of the man who was so indefatigable and so prolific in so many different fields of work. In 1899, only a list of titles of his literary, publicist and scientific works in the 25 years since he began writing for publication filled an entire book of 127 pages!

Just as the selections of Ivan Franko's works in this volume were specifically made for the purpose of acquainting the reader with the conditions in his time and his realis-

tic appraisal of them, so the biographical sketch must be similarly limited. Just mention can be made of his voluminous writings on many subjects and in several languages, his deep knowledge of the literature, history and legends of the ancient Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and Oriental peoples, of the ancient Rus, of the modern Slavic and Western European nations, from which knowledge he dipped constantly in his own works. Some of his love poems are as tender and lovely as anything written in any language. He wrote poems on the Albanian hero Skanderbeg, on Serbian themes, on Jewish life in Galicia, to mention but a few. He also wrote a number of plays ("Stolen Happiness" was recently filmed) and numerous children's tales. He translated Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, Burns, Mickiewicz, Heine, Goethe and numerous other European writers into Ukrainian, and he translated works of Taras Shevchenko and other Ukrainian authors into German and other languages.

Poet, novelist, short story writer, satirist, publicist, folklorist, pamphleteer, historian, literary critic, political activist, scientist—it is hard to single out a genre of literary and public activity to which Ivan Franko did not make a contribution.

Perhaps it will be best to devote the remaining space in this section to a few remarks on his political activity.

Ivan Franko was a socialist. He was the first Ukrainian writer and one of the first writers in the world to write novels of the life and class struggle of the industrial workers (the Borislav cycle). Yet he tended to overemphasize the role of the peasantry. Perhaps because of the tendency of the Austrian and German Social-Democrats to pay no attention or even to treat negatively the peasant and the national problems, Franko became cool to the western socialist leaders, and at the same time had only slight contact with the Bolsheviks of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (he received and studied some issues of the underground Bolshevik paper "Iskra"). In 1896 he wrote:

"After the death of both the great theoreticians of socialism, Marx and Engels, Social-Democracy lacks similarly

powerful views, which would be able to finish the structure which they began, or rather, to advance socialist thought and develop it in accordance with the ever newer achievements of science and the social progress of mankind. It is a sad phenomenon that the leading role in Social-Democratic 'science' in Germany could have been assumed by such a shallow doctrinaire as Kautsky, who apart from lightness of pen and boastfulness, which is inherent in doctrinaires, lacks everything that is necessary for a person who has the pretention to break new paths in the thinking of the working people."

Ivan Franko wrote the first socialist program for Galicia (in which there were elements of "peasant socialism"), but the party which he helped to establish and which exercised a considerable influence on the people, the Radical party, was an agrarian party. Eventually the right wing split the Radical party, formed a conservative party . . .

Franko was a materialist in philosophy and his historical view can be gleaned from the following sentence on the role of personality in history: "It is not individual men who evoke the facts of history, but the conditions and facts that bring forward the men."

He nurtured the flowers of spring through the hardest years of winter, convinced that socialism would come to his people—as it has.

## 10. Part of Our Tradition

*Through the centuries you'll march,  
My spirit's stamp upon you.*

—IVAN FRANKO

THE SPIRITUAL achievements of all nations are the common heritage of all men. Ivan Franko was one of the thinkers, writers and men of affairs who toiled to pave the way for the fulfilment of the 20th Century—the fulfilment that is under way in all the world with all the travail that accompanies birth. As such he belongs to all people.

The same conditions that shaped Ivan Franko and directed his life's work, the conditions he rallied his people to fight and to change, also drove masses of his countrymen from their hearths and homes, from the land their fathers had watered with their blood and sweat since time immemorial, and sent them all over the world to seek salvation. Franko wrote:

*The woe of the Rus has overflowed its banks,  
It has flooded Europe and swept across the sea.*

And he drew a picture of the conditions that brought about this feverish exodus of people who "left their native sod with tears and yet with curses" to embark on an unknown life in unknown lands because—

*From the poor hamlets a sad groan resounds,  
Children en masse diphtheria slaughters,  
Not one blade of hay in the barn's to be found,*

*Cattle are dying, while roaring flood waters  
Roll over the downs.*

To the half-million Ukrainians in Canada (as to those in the United States, Argentina, Brazil and other lands to which they migrated) Ivan Franko has a special meaning. He was there when they or their fathers left their homeland and he sorrowfully saw them go; to his dying day he kept contact with them and wished them well. And the Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada with Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko in their hearts and on their lips. They helped them to survive in difficult conditions, they succored them in their terrible homesickness and loneliness on the homesteads or on railroad "extra gangs," they taught them to keep their dignity and to find friends in their struggles despite all insults and discrimination (the word "Galician" was used on par with the foulest of curse names at one time), and they gave them faith in themselves and in the future. That is why they gave their societies, libraries and circles from the earliest days the names of Shevchenko and Franko.

In his native land Ivan Franko is universally read and honoured. The University in Lvov, where he was once forbidden to teach, now bears his name. His works are published in millions of copies. They are translated into many languages. He is slowly becoming known also in the English-speaking countries. But in our own country that process of assimilation should be warmer and more rapid because a considerable section of the Canadian people, the Ukrainian Canadians, have brought him directly with them into the stream of Canadian culture and Canadian life.

In that sense he is also part of our Canadian tradition.

Our Canada is a lusty young oak with many roots sunk into many different lands and drawing its spiritual sustenance from many different springs. The addition of the heritage of Ivan Franko to their number will make the Canadian spirit richer, stronger and still more beautiful.

—JOHN WEIR

# Poems



# Spirit of Revolt

ВІЧНИЙ РЕВОЛЮЦІОНЕР

*Deathless spirit of revolt—  
Rousing man to mighty prowess,  
Fight for happiness and progress—  
Flames today as did of old!  
Neither rack of Inquisition,  
Nor the royal despot's prison,  
Nor the troops in war instructed,  
Nor the grimmest guns constructed,  
Nor informer's dastard trade—  
None can lay it in the grave!*

*Bright it burns in human hearts!  
Ages since the spark was lighted,  
Now a world-wide fire's ignited—  
Revolution's on the march!  
Loud and clear the call is sounding,  
Over all the Earth resounding:  
Working folk, from sleep awaken,  
Rise to meet the dawn that's breaking!  
Masses hear and they rejoice,  
Many millions heed the voice.*

*Everywhere the voice resounds:  
'Mong the peasants gaunt and weary,  
In the workshops dank and dreary,*

# SPIRIT OF REVOLT

Words: *Ivan Franko*

Music: *M. Lysenko*

ВІЧНИЙ РЕ-ВО-ЛЮ-ЩО- НЕР, ДУХ, ЩО ТІ- ЛЮРВЕ ДО  
БО- Ю, РВЕ ЗА ПОСТУП, ЩАСТЯ Й ВО- ЛЮ, ВІН ЖИ-  
ВЕ ВІН ШЕ НЕ ВМЕР! НІ ПО- ПІВ-СЬКІ- І ТІР-  
ТУ-РИ, НІ ТЮ-РЕМ- НІ ЦАРСЬКІ МУ- РИ, А- НІ  
ВІНСЬ- КА МУШТ- РО-ВА-НІ НІ ГАР- МА- ТИ ЛАШ-  
ТО-ВА-НІ, НІ ШПІ- ОН- СЬКЕ РЕ-МЕС-ЛО В ГРОБ ЙО-  
ГО ШЕ НЕ ЗВЕ- ЛЮ

*There where misery abounds.  
Everyone the spirit reaches  
From his tears and fears releases.  
Strength is born and resolution  
Not to weep, but seek solution:  
Even if you don't survive,  
For your sons win better life.*

*Deathless spirit of revolt—  
Love of freedom, light of learning,  
Forward pressing, no returning—  
Can't be chained as was of old.  
Now the lava stream is flowing,  
Now the avalanche is rolling—  
Where's the force on Earth so potent  
That can stop this sweeping torrent  
And put out, as though a flame,  
The awaking of the day? . . .*

# Pavers of the Way

КАМЕНЯРИ

*I dreamed a wondrous dream. Before my eyes unfolded  
A vast and barren plain, a flat, forbidding moor,  
And I was standing there, with heavy irons loaded,  
Before a mighty rock, a lofty granite boulder,  
And alongside of me stood many thousands more.*

*Each face was furrowed deep with care, with sorrow misted  
Yet every eye was bright, with ardent love aglow,  
Around each person's arms the chains like serpents twisted,  
And each one's shoulders sagged, for we had all enlisted  
To labour 'neath the weight of an oppressive load.*

*Each man held in his hands a heavy iron hammer,  
And from above we heard a voice of thunder call:  
"Break down this rock! Let neither weariness, nor weather,  
Nor thirst, nor hunger hold you back from this endeavour!  
You are assigned the task to crush that granite wall."*

*Then all of us, as one, on high our hammers lifted,  
And many thousand sledges pounded on the rock  
And bit into the granite—bits and pieces flitted,  
While we, as though despair our human frames had fitted  
With more than human strength, dealt blows without a stop.*

*Like deadly din of war or the Niag'ra's thunder,  
So did our hammers ring unceasing 'gainst the stone;  
And thus we inch by inch pressed on and ever onward,  
Nor faltered in our task, nor flinched, nor buckled under,  
Though many fell to earth with mangled flesh and bone.*

*Yet every one well knew that we would reap no glory,  
Nor would our bloody toil mankind in mem'ry hold,  
That only then upon this road would people journey  
When we had crushed the rock and paved the way securely,  
And when our bones lay rotting here beneath the road.*

*But we had never craved for public adulation,  
For we're not heroes bold, of whom brave tales are told,  
No, we are only slaves, though of our own volition  
We took our chains. We are impressed in freedom's mission:  
We're only pavers of the way on progress road.*

*And all of us were sure that we would crush that granite  
And pave securely with our bones and with our blood  
The highway to the future—and that then upon it  
A new and better life would come into our planet,  
A splendid life of human happiness and good*

*We also knew that in that world which we had quitted,  
The world which we renounced for toil and sweat and chains,  
We left disconsolate our mothers, wives and children,  
While friends and foes alike were furious and bitter,  
And curses heaped on us, our doings and our aims.*

*We knew all this, and oft we sorely were affected—  
The breast was torn with pity and the heart was sad:  
But from our sacred cause we could not be deflected,  
And naught could turn us from the course we had selected,  
And not one man let fall his hammer from his hand.*

*And thus we all advance, in mighty undertaking  
By high ideals united, hammers in our hands.  
What if we are reviled, or by the world forsaken!  
We're laying out the road, the rock obstruction breaking,  
And in our wake will follow happiness for Man.*

## To the Comrades From Prison

ТОВАРИЩАМ З ТЮРМИ

*One by one all the shackles we're shedding  
That to life as of old kept us chained;  
And the mind of old muck we are ridding—  
We shall live, oh my friends, once again!*

*Our new life will be richer and warmer  
Because love in that life will prevail;  
Across seas that are turbid and stormy  
To the port of good fortune we'll sail.*

*Across oceans of hardship and bondage,  
Despite calumny, slander and storm,  
We shall come to the land that is sacred,  
To the land that with friendship is warm.*

*To a new kind of war we are marching,  
Not for royalty, tyrants to reign,  
Not for Church, nor for God, nor for clergy,  
Nor the rule of the rich to maintain.*

*These our aims: human welfare and freedom;  
Free from faith, human reason supreme;  
The world brotherhood firm of the people  
Wherein labour and love shall be free.*

*Let us steadfastly stand in the battle  
And not fear if the first row goes down,  
But march over the corpses to grapple  
The dread foe, nor to give any ground,*

*It's the last of all wars! It's the struggle  
Of mankind to throw over the brute,  
It is freedom suppressing all thralldom,  
It's the "kingdom of God" coming true.*

*Pray no longer to God in the heavens:  
"May Thy kingdom come down to the earth!"  
Because prayer's of meagre assistance  
Where avail only brains and hard work.*

*Not from God will we garner that kingdom,  
Not from saints in the sky will it come,  
Our own reason will guide us, and freedom  
Through our resolute work will be won.*

Written in 1878.

# From the Prisoner's Dock

НА СУДИ

*My judges, pass your sentence now  
Without pretense of mercy, pray!  
Don't think that I will disavow  
What you describe my "wicked" ways.  
Don't hope, my judges, that my head  
Before this court I'll humbly bow,  
Or to believe in your good faith  
I for a moment will allow.*

*Come, pass your sentence without qualms,  
You have the power, as you know!  
Pronounce your sentence without shame,  
Your conscience on a leash you hold;  
Judge as you're told to judge by law,  
Judge harshly, twice as harsh again,  
Because are not the law and you  
A single cog in one machine?*

*I ask one thing alone of you —  
That clearly, frankly you reply:  
What is my crime and that of those  
Who think and act the same as I?  
I challenge you to frankly say:  
"They are subversive! They propose  
Our social system to transform,  
To overturn and to depose!"*

*And also tell the reason why  
That social system we'd transform:  
Because there wealthy people rule,  
The poor are servants, nothing more;  
Because there honest labour is  
Despised, degraded and oppressed,  
Although the system as a whole  
By labour's fed, on labour rests;*

*Because the wealthy parasites  
Extract from labour blood and sweat;  
Because not light, but ignorance  
From rostrum and from pulpit spread;  
Because for greed or royal whim  
A million men go to their graves;  
Because there men to other men  
Are hangmen, gods and abject slaves.*

*And also tell the way we plan  
This social system to transform:  
Not violently, arms in hand,  
Not with the fire and steel of war,  
But by hard work and sacrifice,  
By teaching truth. If just the same,  
Despite our efforts, blood is shed,  
'Twill not be we who are to blame.*

*And finally, my judges, say  
What you yourselves do not deny:  
That what we speak is but the truth.  
That squarely, honestly we strive  
The ends of justice to attain.  
Say this, my judges, openly —  
Then, in your social system's name,  
Your sternest sentence pass on me!*

# Decree Against Famine

УКАЗ ПРОТИ ГОЛОДУ

*Famine struck the Persian nation  
When King Peris wore the crown:  
Poor folk perished of starvation  
In the country's richest towns.*

*Said King Peris, losing patience:  
"This I can't, I won't endure!"  
Quickly, without hesitation,  
He decreed a famine cure.*

*To the magistrates of cities  
Famed for wealth throughout the land,  
This the edict that King Peris  
Wrote and sealed with royal hand:*

*"With no wavering or pity  
This decree you must apply:  
Should a poor man in your city  
Henceforth of starvation die,*

*"Throw a man of wealth and station  
Into prison without bread  
Till this rich man of starvation  
Like the poor is also dead."*

*Lo, a miracle was fashioned:  
Though the price of food did soar,  
Poor folk always got their ration . . .  
And the rich did not get poor.*

## A Parable About Foolishness

ПРИТЧА ПРО НЕРОЗУМ

*One time a foolish hunter  
A little bird ensnared;  
He took it out, intending  
To wring its neck right there.*

*"Oh spare me, spare me, hunter,"  
The tiny creature peeped,  
"I'm just a fluff of feathers  
And not one bite of meat!"*

*"If you will but release me  
And let me go my way,  
Three wisdoms I will teach you  
To serve you all your days."*

*These words intrigued the hunter.  
"This cocky bird," thought he,  
"Thinks he can teach me something!  
What can those wisdoms be?"*

*"My bird," said he, "I promise  
That if your lessons three  
Will help to make me wiser,  
I'll gladly set you free!"*

*"First," said the bird, "don't harbour  
Regrets for what is done,  
And which, for good or evil,  
Can never be undone."*

*"That's true!" the man considered,  
"It's vain to rue what's done,  
For, whether good or evil,  
It cannot be undone."*

*"Next," said the bird, "don't suffer  
And fret and strive and strain  
What has been done to cancel,  
The past bring back again."*

*"That's true!" the man considered,  
"Why waste your strength in vain?  
The past knows no returning,  
What's happened can't be changed."*

*"Third," said the bird, "to stories  
Of marvels pay no heed.  
Do not believe in something  
That simply cannot be!"*

*"That's true!" the man considered,  
"The strangest tales are told,  
Which, when you ponder deeply,  
You know could not be so."*

*"Your lessons taught me something,  
Oh bird," the man exclaimed,  
"So fly away in freedom,  
And don't get caught again."*

*The feathered creature flitted  
And perched high on a limb,  
Then, turning to the hunter,  
Addressed these words to him:*

*"You are a ninny, hunter,  
To let me fool you so!  
You lost a peerless treasure  
When once you let me go!*

*"For know that in my bosom —  
If you'd but known! — there lies  
A priceless pearl, a jewel  
An ostrich egg in size!"*

*The hunter groaned in anguish.  
He thought: "Where were my wits  
To, careless, through my fingers  
Let such a fortune slip?"*

*Around the tree he circled,  
Then sprang the bird to grasp . . .  
But vain were his endeavours —  
He had no wings, alas!*

*So then his tune he altered  
And sweetly 'gan to sing:  
"Come back to me, my pretty,  
I'll treat you like a king!*

*"Your food will be the choicest,  
Your cage will be of gold,  
Your wishes will be granted  
No sooner they are told!"*

*"You fool!" the bird rebuked him,  
"You haven't learned a jot!  
The lessons which I taught you  
You instantly forgot!*

*"You carried out your promise  
And set your captive free,  
Yet not a minute later  
Regretted that kind deed.*

*“So then you took a notion  
To catch me once again —  
To bring back what’s departed  
You groaned and moaned and strained.*

*“And why? ’Cause you gave credence  
To what plain sense denies:  
That in my breast I carry  
A jewel twice my size!”*

## The Emigrants

ЕМИГРАНТИ

*If to your ears, deep in the night, should come  
The drone of railway cars rumbling on the rails,  
From which, as from a bee-hive, sounds the hum  
Of women’s anguished sobs, children’s fretful wails,  
Embittered curses, groans of souls in pain,  
Sad maiden voices and melancholy chants,  
Then do not ask: “Whence comes this awful train?  
Whom does it bear? Where to? What end to gain?”  
Those are the emigrants.*

*If in some railway station you should spy  
Like herrings in a keg, tightly packed, a crowd,  
Women so gaunt and pale you want to cry—  
Like wheat stalks hit by hail, broken, wilted, bowed—  
The children huddled close, without a smile,  
The men morose, of stern, fanatic glance,*

*With care and thwarted dreams each forehead lined,  
Their ragged, dusty bundles round them piled—  
Those are the emigrants.*

*If you could see how those folks are detained,  
How bullied, pushed around, tangled in red tape,  
How mothers in the washrooms tend their babes—  
They hush them, and nurse them, cradle them to sleep,  
How gendarmes elbow them out of the way  
Till the train starts—then there's a frightful scene!  
They all rush down and fall upon the rails:  
"Take us away or kill us!" is their wail—  
That's our society!*

## The Fortune Teller

БОРОЖКА

*"Read my future, sloe-eyed gypsy,  
Tell me what's to happen;  
When my woes at last will vanish?  
When will I be happy?"*

*Long my palm the gypsy studied,  
Then these words she uttered:  
"Don't despair, for but another  
Seven years you'll suffer."*

*I rejoiced. "Now tell me, gypsy,  
What will happen after?"  
"You'll get used to it," she told me  
And she rocked with laughter.*



Zakhar Berkut

ЗАХАР БЕРКУТ

## ZAKHAR BERKUT

This historical novel was first published serially in the Lvov magazine "Zorya" in 1883, and came out in book form that same year.

In this story Ivan Franko describes the remnants of the communal order and pre-Christian beliefs that survived in the Carpathian district, the attempts of the feudal lords to enslave the yet free mountaineers, and the heroic struggle of the people against the Mongol invaders. Refuting the "theory" of "a single current," that is, that there never were any class divisions or struggles among Ukrainians, Franko depicts not only the sharpest struggle between the Tukhlya folk and the boyar Tuhar Vovk (Wolf), but also has the boyar betray his country to the hated enemy.

We are here able to present only several excerpts from this remarkable novel.

"A historical novel has value," Ivan Franko wrote in his foreword, "when its fundamental idea can move contemporary living people, which means that it must itself be contemporary and alive.

"The presentation of the ancient community life of our Rus is, indubitably, such a live subject, close to contemporary interests. How far I succeeded in presenting the spirit of those dim, ancient times, let the critics judge. In the matter of details I permitted myself to fill out the skimpy historical skeleton with poetical fiction. The main base is taken partly from history (the invasion of the Mongols and their chieftain Peta) and partly from folk legends (about the drowning of the Mongol detachment, etc.)."

*The affairs of days long past,  
Tales passed on from ancient times . . .*

—A. S. PUSHKIN

## I

IT IS SAD and unfriendly now in our Tukhlya district! It is true that both the Strey and the Opir rivers lave its green, sandy banks as they did before, that the meadows are covered with grasses and flowers as of old, and that the *berkut*—the mountain eagle—soars and wheels in the clear azure sky as in ages past. But how everything else has changed! The forests, and the villages, and the people! Where long ago thick and impenetrable woods blanketed practically the entire area, except for the high mountain-valleys, and descended to the very rivers, now they have melted like snow in the sun, thinned out, become smaller and, in some places, disappeared altogether, leaving bald patches behind; in other places only smoke-blackened stumps remain, from between which timidly grows a little silver fir or an even more miserable little juniper. Where long ago silence reigned here, not a voice was heard except for the notes of a shepherd's *trembita* on some far-away mountain dale or the bellow of a wild aurox or a stag in the thick of the wood, now ox-drivers call out in the fields and the

loggers, sawyers and shingle-makers shout to one another in the gullies and thickets as they ceaselessly gnaw away, like so many never-dying maggots, and bring down the century-old junipers and fir trees, the beauty of the Tukhlya mountains, either cutting them into large logs and sending them downstream to the new steam sawmills, or sawing them into boards and shingles on the spot.

But the people have changed most of all. Looking down superficially, it would seem that "culture" has grown among them, but in fact it turns out that only their number has grown. There are more villages and hamlets, and more houses in the villages, but on the other hand, poverty and need are greater in those houses. The people are poverty-stricken, depressed and dismal, and they are timid and artless in the presence of strangers. Each one cares only for himself, not realizing that in this way their strength is pulverized, their community is weakened. That's not how it was here once! Although there were fewer people, what people they were!—how life seethed in these mountains, amid the impenetrable forests at the foot of the mighty Zelemen! For many centuries an evil fate dealt cruelly with these people. Heavy blows undermined their well-being and poverty broke down their free, sturdy character, until today only vague recollections of the misty past recall the happy life of the ancestors to their descendants. And when, sometimes, an old granny, sitting by the brick oven and spinning coarse wool, begins to tell her wee grandchildren about the ancient times, about the invasions of the Mongol-dogheads and about the Tukhlya chieftain Berkut, the children listen in awe and tears glisten in their grey eyes. When the marvellous story is ended, both the old and the young sigh and whisper: "Oh, but that was a lovely fairy tale!"

"Yes, yes," granny says, nodding her head, "yes, yes, children! For us it's a fairy tale, but once it was true!"

"I wonder if such times will ever come again," one of the older ones interjects.

"Old people say that they will come again, but that will probably be just before the end of the world."

It is sad and unfriendly now in our Tukhlya district! The story of ancient times and ancient people seems a fairy tale. The folks of today, who were reared in poverty and oppression, who are the heirs of a thousand years of slavery and dependence, can't credit the past. Well, let that be as it may! The imagination of the poet flies to those ancient days and brings to life the ancient people, and whoever has a pure heart and sincerely-human feelings, he will see in them his own brothers, a living people, and in their life, however different from ours, he will note much that could be desirable even in our "cultured" times.

It was 1241. Spring had come to the Tukhlya mountains.

One beautiful day the wooded foothills of Zelemen rang with the sounds of hunters' horns and the shouts of numerous archers.

The new Tukhlya *boyar* Tuhar Vovk was conducting a great hunt for big game. He was celebrating the beginning of his new life, for not long before Prince Danilo had granted him vast downs in the Tukhlya district and one whole side of the foothills of Zelemen; he had lately come to these mountains and built himself a grand house, and now he was holding his first feast and becoming acquainted with the neighboring *boyars*. After the feast they sallied to the Tukhlya forests to hunt.

Hunting big game is not light sport, but a hard struggle, often bloody and often also a battle to the death. Bison, bears, wild boars—they are dangerous opponents; it was rare for someone to be able to bring down such a beast with an arrow; even a catapult, brought to bear on the opponent at a suitable distance, did not finish him off very easily. Therefore the final and decisive weapon was the spear, which had to be hurled into the vital spot from close up, by hand, and with full force at one blow. If the thrust wasn't true, the life of the hunter was placed in the gravest jeopardy, unless at the last moment he managed to hide in a protective hiding place and draw his sword or seize a heavy battle-axe for defence.

It is not strange, therefore, that Tuhar and his guests went to the hunt as they would to war, with a supply of arrows and catapults, with servants and supplies of food, and even with an experienced sorcerer, who knew incantations for wounds. It is also not strange that Tuhar and his guests were in full knight's armour, except for shields, which would have interfered with their progress through the thickets and windfalls. The only odd thing was that Tuhar's daughter Miroslava, who would not be left behind by her father, also boldly ventured along with the guests to the hunt. The Tukhlya folk, who saw her as she rode among the guests to the hunt, proud and plucky, like a slim poplar among broad oaks, followed her admiringly with their eyes, saying:

“There's a maid! One would not be sorry to be the husband of such a one. Sure, she'd make a finer man than her sire!”

And that, to be sure, was considerable praise, for Tuhar Vovk was a man like an oak. Broad-shouldered, somewhat squat, with heavy features and coarse black hair, he himself resembled one of those savage Tukhlya bears which he was hunting. But his daughter Miroslava also was a girl whose equal it would be hard to find. We are not speaking of her beauty or her good heart—in regard to these many girls of her age could stand on a par with her, though few could surpass her. But she had no peer among the girls of her age in the natural freedom of her bearing, in the remarkable strength of her muscles, in her boldness and resoluteness, which are found only in men who grew up in ceaseless struggle against adverse circumstances. From the very first glance you saw that Miroslava had grown up in freedom, that her upbringing had been masculine and that in this beautifully formed maiden body there dwelt a strong and highly gifted spirit. She was her father's only child, and in addition, she had lost her mother at birth. Her nurse, an old peasant woman, accustomed her from the most tender age to physical labour of all kinds, and when she grew older, her father, in order to lighten his loneliness, took her with

him everywhere, and in order to appease her fiery nature he taught her to wield knightly arms, to withstand all sorts of discomfort and to boldly stand up in the face of danger. And the greater the difficulties she had to overcome, the more eagerly she went at it, and the strength of her body and of her resolute, frank nature was demonstrated more and more. But along with all this Miroslava never ceased to be a woman: a gentle and good girl with quick sympathy and a modest, bashful countenance, and all this blended in her in such wonderful and charming harmony that whoever saw her and heard her speak once, could not forget her face, her carriage and her voice as long as he lived—they appeared in his memory alive and clear in the best moments of his life, just as Spring brings even to the oldest gaffer the memory of the sweetheart of his youth.

It was the third day of the hunt already. Many antlered stags and black-maned ure-ox had been brought down by *boyar* arrows and spears. The tents of the hunters stood in a green clearing in the forest beside a noisy mountain stream, where big fires incessantly belched smoke, while boilers hung on hooks over them and pikes turned this way and that—the meat of the killed wild beasts was being boiled and broiled for the guests. This day, the last of the hunt, was to be dedicated to the main and also the most dangerous event—the bear-hunt.

The main den of the bears had long been in one precipitous ravine, which was separated from the rest by terrible thickets, thickly overgrown with beeches and fir-trees, and covered with stumps and windfalls. Here, asserted the Tukhlya guide, the young mountaineer Maxim Berkut, the mother bear had her lair. It was from here that the savage beasts emerged to terrorize the entire district and the mountain valleys. And though the bold shepherds often managed to kill a bear or two with arrows and axes, or to lure them into snares where heavy logs came hurtling down and broke their backs, yet their number was too great for that to bring much comfort to the neighborhood. So it was no wonder that, when the newly-arrived *boyar* Tuhar Vovk notified the

Tukhlya folk that he wanted to organize a big bear-hunt, and asked them to supply him with a guide, they not only gave him for a guide Maxim Berkut, the finest young brave in all the Tukhlya highlands, the son of the Tukhlya spokesman Zakhar, but in addition a volunteer detachment of young men with bows and spears came to help the assembled guests. This whole crowd was to surround the lair of the bears and to wipe out the foul beasts completely.

From the first hint of dawn there had been great commotion and apprehensive restlessness in the hunters' camp. The boyars' servants had been busy from midnight, preparing a whole day's food for the guests and filling the drinking pouches with fizzing mead and apple cider. The Tukhlya lads were also getting ready, sharpening their knives and broadswords, putting on their strong bison-hide footwear, and putting broiled meat, loaves, cheese and everything that could come in handy during a full day of difficult travel into their small double-knapsacks. Maxim Berkut, who only today, face to face with a most important and most difficult business, felt himself fully the chief of this small army, directed operations with the care and dignity of a true leader, forgetting nothing, and neither hurrying nor lagging with anything. With him everything emerged in its proper time and place, without confusion or trouble. He appeared wherever he was needed and everywhere he managed to bring order and harmony. Whether he was among his Tukhlya comrades, the *boyars*, or their servants, Maxim Berkut was always the same, calm and free in his movements and in his speech, like an equal among equals. His comrades treated him the way he treated them, freely, unconstrainedly laughing and joking with him and yet carrying out his orders to the letter, quickly and as happily and gaily as though they would have done the same thing on their own, without orders. The *boyar* servants, although far from being of such an even nature, not so free in their manners and much more ready to jeer at some and fawn before others, nevertheless respected Maxim Berkut for his unpretentiousness and sagacity, and did what he told them to do, though

not without jibes and jokes. And the *boyars* themselves, in the main men of pride and warriors who were not pleased to have a "smerd" in their company, and worse yet, a smerd who seemed to consider himself their equal, did not show their unwillingness too obviously and also carried out the orders of their youthful guide, having at every step an opportunity to convince themselves that those orders were fully sensible, just what was needed.

It was still some time before the sun would begin to rise when the hunters' company started moving out of camp. Deep silence reigned over the mountains; the shades of night drowsed under the dark-green crowns of the fir-trees; drops of dew hung on the thick, jaggy fern leaves; crawling green vines twisted about underfoot, got tangled among the roots of the large uprooted tree-logs, and got woven together with clumps of sinuous, thorny brambles and plaits of wild upward-striving hops into impassable tangles. The mist rose in grey clouds from the deep ravines, which were black as the mouths of craters, a sign that small forest streams flowed at the bottom of those ravines. The air of the forest was saturated with that vapour and with the scent of gum; it took the breath away as though broader chests were needed to breathe it freely.

The detachment of hunters made its way in silence through the impassable jungles, thickets and windfalls, without a path or any guiding marks in the gloomy wilderness. Maxim Berkut walked at the head, and Tuhar Vovk and the other *boyars* followed. By Tuhar's side walked his daughter Miroslava. The Tukhlya lads walked in the rear. All looked about and listened intently as they walked.

The forest began to awaken to daily life. A speckled jay wheezed in the fir tops, and a green woodpecker, clinging to a stump right above the heads of the passers-by, pecked at the bark with his steel beak. The bellows of aurochs and the howls of wolves rose from distant precipices. At that time of day the bears, having gorged, slumbered on their beds of moss beneath piles of windfalls. A herd of wild boars grunted

somewhere in a thicket, cooling themselves in the cold slime.

For about an hour the company trudged along that difficult untrod road. All breathed heavily, barely able to pump enough air with their lungs, and all wiped beads of sweat from their faces. Maxim often glanced to the rear. At first he had opposed a woman going along with the men on that dangerous march, but Miroslava would not give way. This was the first time that she had participated in such a big hunt, so how could she miss the best part of it because of some kind of difficulties! None of Maxim's arguments about the hardships of the journey, the dangers at its destination, or the strength and savagery of the beasts could convince her. "All the better! All the better!" she said with such a bold mien and such a sweet smile that Maxim could say no more, as though he were under a spell. Her father, who at first had advised Miroslava to remain at camp, at the end was also compelled to accede to her pleas. Now Maxim looked in amazement at how this extraordinary woman overcame the various difficulties of the hard road on par with the strongest men, how lightly she leaped over rotten logs and huge fallen trees, with what sure steps she walked along the edge of a precipice or up sharp inclines, and slipped through tangles, and at the same time she moved with such confidence and was so indefatigable, that it seemed to Maxim that she must rise on magic wings. He looked at her and could not tear his eyes away.

"What a strange girl!" the thought kept returning to him. "I have never seen her like before!"

At last they arrived at their destination. The bears' lair was on a high hill, which could be reached only from the south side, and that with difficulty, and which was covered with thick beeches and fir-trees, choked up with windfalls and uprooted trees. From the north, west and east both entry and exit were blocked by high craggy walls that looked as though they had been split away with an axe from the giant Zelemen and shoved a couple of hundred feet away from it. Along a narrow crack at the bottom of those crags

a cold mountain stream clamoured and foamed. Such circumstances favoured our hunters; they only had to plant themselves along the mountain road at the south end, which was not too wide, and move along that road farther and farther uphill, and the bears, having no means of escape, would inevitably fall into their hands and onto their spears.

Arriving at this important, though very dangerous, passageway, Maxim Berkut told the company to lie down for a moment and rest, in order to gather strength for the hard task ahead. The sun was rising, but the branches of the firs and the neighbouring hills hid its face. After a brief rest Maxim began to arrange the hunters in two rows so as to completely cover the road. So long as the road remained narrow each hunter would be standing about five paces from his neighbor, but farther up the hill, where the road widened to become an entire slanting plane, the hunters would have to be farther apart. Only one thing troubled him: what to do with Miroslava, who insisted that she take up a separate position, instead of staying at her father's side.

"Am I worse than those young men of yours?" she spoke to Maxim, turning as red as a rose. "You are placing them on positions, and yet you refuse to do the same with me . . . No, that will never be! It would be a shame for my father, too, if there were two of us at one position! Wouldn't it, father?"

Tuhar Vovk could not argue against her. Maxim began to tell her about the danger, describing the strength and viciousness of the maddened animals, but she quickly silenced him.

"Have I no strength, then? Do I not know how to use a bow and arrow, a spear and an axe? Just let one of your young men try to fight a duel with me, and we'll see who is the stronger!"

Finally Maxim fell silent and let her have her way. How could he oppose this strange, charming girl? He wanted, at least, to assign her to a less dangerous position, but, as ill-luck would have it, this was impossible because all positions

here were equally dangerous. Having arranged the entire company, Maxim gave the following instructions:

“Now let us pray to whatever gods each one knows, and then let us together blow our horns. This will be our first signal and it will frighten the beasts. Then we will march uphill along the road and we’ll stop there where it widens. There my comrades will remain to watch the exit so that not a single bear should escape, while you, *boyars*, will keep on going, right to the she-bear’s den!”

A minute later the forests and mountain valleys echoed with the hoarse sound of the bison horns. It rolled along the woods and ravines like a huge wave, breaking up, deadening, and then doubling in volume again. The forests awoke. A black kite screeched above the tops of the fir-trees; a frightened mountain-eagle rose high in the air, flapping his wide-spread wings; bears crackled among the windfalls, seeking a safer hiding-place. Suddenly the noise of the horns ceased and the hunters set out up the hill along the road. Everyone’s heart beat more quickly in anticipation of unknown dangers, battles and victories. They moved carefully in rows: the *boyars*’ row ahead, the young men’s row next, while Maxim went ahead, vigilantly listening and tracking down the beasts. The monarch of the windfalls, the bear, had not yet shown himself.

They reached the narrowest neck, beyond which the road widened into a large, sloping plane. At Maxim’s orders the hunters halted here again, and once more they thundered, with even greater force, on their bison horns, bringing terror into the dark winter-lairs of the bears. Suddenly a wind-fall crackled near-by, behind a huge mass of thick, rotten uprooted trees.

“Attention!” Maxim cried. “The beast is coming near!”

Hardly had he said these words when suddenly a huge, hairy head thrust through a large opening between two overturned stumps, and two grey eyes, half-curious and half-frightened, fixed on Tuhar Vovk, who stood at his position about ten paces away from the opening. Tuhar was an old

warrior and an old huntsman, he didn't know what fear was. So without a word or a sound he pulled a heavy steel arrow out of his quiver, fitted it to the bow and aimed at the beast.

"Aim at the eye, *boyar!*" Maxim whispered from behind.

A minute of anxious silence, then the arrow whistled, and with a roar the bear hurled himself backward as though he were mad. Although in this way he disappeared from the hunters' sight, being concealed by a pile of windfalls, his roars and savage threshings did not abate.

"After him!" shouted Tuhar Vovk and he rushed to the opening, through which the bear had disappeared. At the same time two *boyars* had already climbed to the top of the uprooted tree and lifted their spears, striving to give them the impetus necessary to finish the beast. Standing in the opening, Tuhar Vovk sank another arrow into him. The bear roared even more fiercely and turned to run, but blood flowed into his eyes, and he couldn't find his way out, running blindly into the trees. A *boyar's* spear pierced his side, but did not wound him mortally. The savage bellow of the wounded bear resounded ever more powerfully. In desperation he rose on his hind feet, wiped the blood away from his eyes, tore branches off trees and hurled them in front of him, but all in vain: one of his eyes had been hit by an arrow, while blood continually blinded the other one.

Threshing about blindly, the beast again came close to Tuhar Vovk. The latter threw aside his bow and, concealing himself behind an overturned tree, he grasped his heavy axe in both hands, and when the bear, feeling his way, approached the familiar opening, he brought the axe down with full force on his head, splitting the skull in two like a squash. The bloody brains splashed on the *boyar* and the beast dropped without a sound. The horns of the *boyars* sounded joyfully to signalize the first victory.

\* \* \*

The ancient village of Tukhlya was a large mountain settlement which, together with two or three fair-sized nearby settlements, had about fifteen hundred dwellers. The

village and the adjacent settlements were not situated on the site of present-day Tukhlya, but higher up in the mountains in a wide long-stretching valley that is now covered with trees and is called the Zapala valley. In those ancient days in which our tale is laid Zapala valley was not wooded, it was cultivated and provided its inhabitants with a harvest of grain. Stretching more than half a mile in length, and almost a quarter of a mile wide, even and loamy, fenced on all sides with steep stone walls, sometimes three and even four *sagene* high, this valley was like an enormous boiler, from which the water had been emptied. And actually that's what must have taken place. A sizeable mountain stream fell a *sagene* and a half into this valley from the east in a waterfall, made its way through tightly pressed rocks, then circling the valley like a serpent it flowed out in the west through a similar narrow gateway, smashing against the smooth rock walls and rattling down a few more waterfalls before it fell into the Opir a quarter of a mile farther down. The high, steep banks of the Tukhlya boiler were overgrown with dark-hued evergreen forests, which gave the valley itself an appearance of being even deeper than it was, and gave it a sort of wilderness air, quiet and separated from the whole world. This was in truth a huge mountain hide-away, accessible on all sides only with the greatest difficulty, but in those days of constant warfare, quarrels and raids nearly all the mountain villages were like that, and it was only thanks to their impregnability that they were able, longer than the villages in the plains, to protect their free ancient-Rus community life, which the proud, war-enriched *boyars* strove to undermine more and more in other parts of the land.

The Tukhlya folk made their living mainly as herdsmen. Only the valley where the village itself lay, and several smaller stretches along the rivers which were not covered with trees, were arable, and each year they yielded fine crops of oats, barley and millet. In the mountain clearings, however, which were the property of the Tukhlya community along with the surrounding forests, grazed great herds of sheep, in which reposed the main treasures of the people

of Tukhlya: from them they derived their clothing and dairy food, their fats and their meat.

Cows and oxen pastured in the woods around the village, but the locality itself—mountainous, craggy and impenetrable—forbade cattle-raising to any great extent. The next main source of affluence of the Tukhlya folk were the forests. Not to speak of wood, which they got free for both fuel and building purposes, the forests provided the Tukhlya people with wild animals, forest fruits and honey. Life in the woods and the inaccessible, wild mountains was hard, it was a constant battle with nature—with floods, snows, wild beasts and impassable terrain—but this struggle nevertheless produced strength, boldness and enterprise in the people, it was the foundation and the mainspring of their strong, free communal order.

The sun had already dipped far down since mid-day when our company of hunters, led by Maxim Berkut, descended from the heights to the Tukhlya valley. Tuhar Vovk, his daughter and Maxim walked in front, and the rest of the company followed in small groups, chattering about the hunt and the adventures they had taken part in. The Tukhlya valley unfolded before their eyes, flooded with warm sunlight, looking like a big green lake with dark islets in it. Around it, like a huge fence, stood the stone walls, on which combings of green bramble and bushes of hazel-wood stretched upward here and there. At the entrance to the valley the waterfall roared, smashing against the stones with a silvery foam, while beside the waterfall there was hewed in the rock a narrow mountain-trail, which took one up and farther along the banks of the stream past the peaks and the mountain clearings, right to the Hungarian land—this was the Tukhlya Pass, famous among the mountaineers of that day as the easiest and safest crossing next to the Duklya Pass: ten neighboring communities from both the Galician and the Hungarian sides had worked almost two years on building this pass. The Tukhlya people put in the most work and they proudly looked on it as though it were their own.

"Look, *boyar*," said Maxim, halting above the waterfall, at the entrance to the winding mountain-path, cut in the rock, "look, *boyar*, that's the work of the Tukhlya community! This road stretches far beyond the Beskid range, and it's the finest in the highlands. My father himself supervised its construction for the distance of five miles; every bridge, every twist, every cut-through was made according to his indications."

The *boyar* glanced up without interest at the mountains where the winding footpath could be seen for a long distance following the streams as they wound their way between the crags. Then he looked down the road and shook his head.

"Has your father great authority over the community?" he asked.

"Authority, *boyar*?" Maxim replied in surprise. "No, among us no one has authority over the community: the community itself is the authority, *boyar*, and no one else. But my father is a man of great experience and he readily serves the community. No one in the entire highlands can speak as well as he does at the community councils. The community listens to my father's advice, but as to authority, he doesn't have it and neither does he want it."

Maxim's eyes glistened with sparks of pride and wonder whenever he spoke of his father. Tuhar Vovk bent his head in thought at his words, but his daughter could not take her eyes off Maxim. Listening to Maxim's words she felt that his father was becoming near and dear to her as though she had lived her whole life under his paternal care.

But Tuhar Vovk became more and more morose, he frowned and turned his eyes, filled with barely suppressed anger, on Maxim.

"It is your father, then, who is agitating the Tukhlya people to rebel against me and against the prince?" he asked suddenly in a tart, sharp tone. Those words struck Miroslava like a painful blow; she paled and looked at her father and Maxim in turns. But those words did not confuse Maxim one whit and he answered calmly:

"Agitating the people, *boyar*? No, you have been told an

untruth. The whole community is angry with you for taking to yourself the woods and mountain meadow without even asking the community whether it agrees to such a thing."

"Ah, so, I should ask your community yet! The prince granted me that wood and that meadow, and I am obliged to ask no one else."

"That's exactly what my father is telling the community, *boyar*. My father is trying to calm the community down and advises waiting for the community tribunal, at which the matter will be gone into."

"Community tribunal indeed!" Tuhar Vovk cried out. "Do you mean that I am expected to stand before such a tribunal?"

"I think that it is to your own advantage. You will then be able to prove your rights to everybody and calm the community down."

Tuhar Vovk turned away. They continued descending the path, which twisted in the middle in order to make the way less steep and less dangerous. Maxim, dropping behind, did not take his eyes off Miroslava. But his face no longer shone with such pure happiness as it had previously. The darker the clouds of anger and disappointment that gathered on her father's visage, the more clearly did Maxim feel that a deep chasm was opening up between him and Miroslava. Moreover, he was a child of the mountains who was ignorant of the wide world and of the *boyars'* ambitions, so he did not even suspect how wide and deep that chasm actually was.

They reached the valley. Beneath the waterfall the stream formed a capacious pool, whose water was as calm and clear as a tear. In the water by the banks of the pool, there were large caps of pearly, frothy foam; its bottom bristled with sharp pieces of rock, big and small; trout, swift as arrows, flashed their pearly-yellow red-dotted sides among the rocks; at the end of the cove the waterfall roared down the wall of stone like a silver pillar, shining to the sun with all the colours of the rainbow.

"What a wonderful spot," Miroslava cried, gazing up at

the waterfall and the piles of wildly scattered crags, fringed at the top with a dark-green blanket of fir-tree forest.

"That's our Tukhlya, our Eden!" Maxim said, eyeing the valley, the mountains and the waterfalls with such great pride, that rare is the monarch who looks over his realm in just such a way.

"Only you are poisoning my life for me in that Eden," said Tuhar Vovk angrily.

No one replied to those words; all three continued to walk in silence. They neared the village, which sprawled out in thick bunches of well-to-do, shingled houses, thickly surrounded by ancient willows and branchy pear-trees. The people were away at work in the field; only old grand-dads, sedate and grey-bearded, ambled beside the houses, whittled, weaved snares for animals and nets for fish, or conversed about community affairs. Maxim bowed to them and greeted them loudly and in friendly fashion; after a bit Miroslava also began to greet the Tukhlya oldsters who were standing on the road; only Tuhar Vovk walked in sulky silence, refusing even to look at those smerds who dared to oppose the will of his prince.

In the centre of the village they were met by an odd group. Three old men, dressed in holiday attire, walked along the road, carrying on a long pole, beautifully carved and ornamented with silver, a large chain, also ornamented with silver, which was made entirely from one piece of wood in the shape of rings that could not be broken and were interlocked. Above that chain waved a scarlet banner, embroidered with silver thread. The three old men walked slowly. They stopped in front of each yard and loudly called out the masters by name, and when someone of the household came out, they said:

"Tomorrow to the kopal!" and they went on.

"What sort of circus is that?" asked Tuhar Vovk when the old men began to draw close.

"Have you never seen it before?" asked Maxim in amazement.



"Never. There are no such customs in our parts, in Halich."

"They're calling the people to the kopa, the community council," said Maxim.

"I thought they were priests with ikons," Tuhar began to jeer. "In our parts when the kopa is called, it is done quietly, passing the kopa banner from house to house."

"With us the kopa banner is carried through the village by these heralds; they are supposed to call every citizen by name to the kopa. They will call you, too, boyar."

"Let them call me, I won't come! Your kopa has nothing to do with me. I am here by the prince's will and I can myself call the kopa whenever I consider it necessary."

"You, yourself . . . can call a kopa?" asked the puzzled Maxim. "Without our heralds? Without our banner?"

"I have my own heralds and my own banner."

"But none of our community would go to your kopa. And whatever our kopa decides, that's how it will be in our community."

"We shall see!" said Tuhar Vovk, angrily and stubbornly.

At that moment our hunters came up to the heralds. Seeing the boyar, the heralds laid down the banner and one of them spoke:

"Boyar Tuhar Vovk!"

"Here I am," the boyar replied morosely.

"Tomorrow to the kopal!"

"For what purpose?"

But the heralds did not answer him and went on.

"It is not for them, boyar, to say what the purpose is," explained Maxim, trying with all his might to overcome the boyar's ill-will to the Tukhlya community council. After a lengthy silence, during which they continued to walk through the village, Maxim again began to speak:

"Boyar, let me, an inexperienced youth, tell you something."

"Speak!" said the boyar.

"Come tomorrow to the kopal!"

"And submit to your low-born tribunal?"

“So what, boyar? The Tukhlya community passes judgment according to the justice of the case, and surely it is no shame to submit to a just court?”

\* \* \*

*(The Tukhlya folk trap a Mongol invasion army, to whose side the boyar Tuhar Vovk has gone, inside their valley “boiler” and having blocked the narrow exit, they flood the valley and drown the invaders. Miroslava is saved, but the Tukhlya folk think that Maxim Berkut was drowned, as does their sage leader, Maxim’s father, Zakhar Berkut.)*

\* \* \*

The Tukhlya people stood along the heights without a sound, as though they were dead. Old Zakhar, hitherto so strong and indestructible, now trembled like a baby and wept, covering his face with his hands. At his feet Miroslava lay still, in a faint.

Suddenly a joyful shout rose from below. The lads on the rafts, having come to the place where Maxim had sunk with Burunda, suddenly saw Maxim emerge to the surface of the water hale and strong and they greeted him with that joyous shout. Their joy was soon shared by the whole community. Even those who had lost their sons, brothers and husbands were joyful about Maxim, as though with his return all the dear ones who had fallen in battle had come back.

“Maxim is alive! Maxim is alive! Hurrah for Maxim!” thunderous shouts resounded and were carried far away across the forests and the mountains. “Father Zakhar, your son is alive! Your son is come back to you!”

Trembling with great agitation, Zakhar rose with tears in his old eyes.

“Where is he? Where is my son?” he asked in a weak voice.

Soaking with water, but his face shining with happiness, Maxim leaped from the raft onto the bank and flung himself at his father’s feet.

“Father!”

“My son, Maxim!”

Neither the one nor the other could say more. Zakhar swayed and fell into Maxim’s strong arms.

“My father, what is the matter with you?” cried Maxim, seeing deathly pallor on his face and feeling the ceaseless trembling that shook his frame.

“Nothing, my son, nothing,” said Zakhar quietly, with a smile. “The Storozh is calling me to himself. I hear his voice, son. He calls to me: Zakhar, you have done your duty and it is now time to rest!”

“Father, father, don’t say that!” Maxim sobbed, nestling to him. Old Zakhar, calmly, smiling, lay on the sward, his face transfigured, his eyes turned to the noon-day sun. Lightly he lifted his son’s hand from his breast and said:

“No, son, do not mourn for me, I am happy! But look close by. There is someone there who needs your help.”

Maxim looked around and stood stock-still. Miroslava lay on the ground, ashen, with an expression of desperation on her lovely face. The lads had already brought some water and Maxim ran to bring his loved one back to consciousness. She sighed, opened her eyes and then closed them again.

“Miroslava! Miroslava! My own heart!” cried Maxim, kissing her hands, “Awaken!”

Miroslava again became conscious and she stared at Maxim’s face, her eyes wide with wonder.

“Where am I? What has happened to me?” she asked in a weak voice.

“You are here, among us! With your Maxim!”

“Maxim?” she cried, springing up.

“Yes, yes! Look, I’m alive, I’m free!”

Miroslava was silent for a long, long time, unable to come out of her wonder. Then abruptly she threw herself in Maxim’s arms and hot tears splashed from her eyes.

“Maxim, my heart! . . .”

She couldn’t say anything more.

“But where is my father?” Miroslava asked after a minute. Maxim turned his face away.

“Do not think of him, dear heart. He, who weighs justice and injustice, is now weighing his good deeds and his evil deeds. Let us pray that the good should prevail.”

Miroslava wiped away the tears from her eyes and glanced at Maxim with a look full of love.

“But come, Miroslava,” said Maxim, “here is our father and he, too, is leaving us.”

Zakhar looked at the young pair with bright, happy eyes.

“Kneel beside me, children,” he said quietly, in a voice that was already weak. “Daughter Miroslava, your father fell—let us not judge whether he was guilty or not—he fell as thousands of others have fallen. Do not mourn, daughter! In place of a father the fates are giving you a brother . . .”

And with lips that were already cool he kissed Miroslava and Maxim on the forehead.

“And now, children, rise and lift me a little! Before I go I would like to say something to the community which I tried to serve sincerely all my life. Fathers and brothers! This day’s victory is a matter of great importance to us. How did we win? Was it only due to our weapons? No. Was it only our cleverness? No. We won by our communal order, by our harmony and friendship. Remember this well! So long as you shall live in your community order, holding together in friendship, unwaveringly standing all for one and one for all, so long no enemy force will be able to vanquish you. But I know, brothers, and my soul feels that this will not be the last blow at our communal fastness, that other blows will follow, and that in the end they will smash our community. Evil times will descend upon our people. Brother will deny brother, son will deny father, and there will begin great quarrels, and conflicts will rend the Rus land, and they will destroy the power of the people, and then the whole people will fall into slavery to both our own and alien invaders, and they will transform them into meek slaves of their whims and into beasts of burden. But amid their misery the people will recall their ancient community spirit and it will be well for them if they recall it soon and vividly—that will save them a sea of tears and blood, whole

centuries of slavery. But whether sooner or later, they will recall the way their ancestors lived and they will have the desire to follow in their footsteps. Fortunate is he who will be fated to live in those days! They will be beautiful days, days of spring, days of the people's revival! So pass on to your children and to your grandchildren the story about life in olden times and about the ancient order. Let that memory live among them in the coming times of evil as a live ember does not die out in the ashes. The time will come when the spark will blaze up into a new fire! Farewell!"

Old Zakhar sighed heavily, glanced at the sun, smiled, and in a moment he was no more.

They did not weep for him, neither his son, nor his neighbours, nor his fellow-villagers, for they well knew that it is a sin to weep for one who is happy. With joyful songs they washed his body and carried it to Yasna glade, to the ancient domicile of the gods of their forefathers, and placed it in a stone temple, its face towards the golden image of the sun, set in the ceiling, and then they closed up the entrance with a huge slab and they walled it up. Thus old Zakhar was laid to rest in the lap of those gods that lived in his heart and inspired him during his entire life with ideas that were upright and were directed to the common good.

Much has changed since those times. The prophecy of the old community leader, alas, came only too true. Great evils passed like a tornado over the Rus land. The old community was forgotten and, it seemed, buried forever. But not! Has it not been fated for our times to revive it? Is it not we who live in the happy age of the rebirth of which Zakhar spoke when he was dying—or at least at the dawn of that happy age?

WRITTEN IN 1882.

Oleksa Dovbush Settles an Account  
ДОВБУШ РОЗПЛАЧУЄТЬСЯ

## OLESKA DOVBUSH SETTLES AN ACCOUNT

This is a chapter from Ivan Franko's first novel "Petriyi i Dovbushchuki," which was first published in the student magazine "Druh" (Friend) in 1875-76. The novel dealt with a feud between the descendants of the famous leader of the "oprishki" (bands of young Hutsul rebels who harassed the feudal gentry) Oleksa Dovbush and his right hand man Petriy. We selected this chapter because it shows how the Polish nobles established their rule in Ukraine—and how the Ukrainian people fought against them—and touches on a legendary hero of the Ukrainian people.

The oprishki were augmented by runaway serfs, who found shelter in the wooded mountains and joined the mountain bands to make raids on feudal estates, burn the manor houses, divide the property of the gentry among the peasants, and punish the cruelest oppressors of the common folk.

In the 1730's and 40's a bold oprishko, Oleksa Dovbush, became famous throughout the land. Many songs and legends about his feats survive to this day. There was a big reward offered for his head—a cap full of gold pieces, "chervintsi"—but Dovbush carried retribution to the feudal landlords for many years before he was killed.

He was a Ukrainian "Robin Hood."

“MY HOME is my castle!” The proud old voyevoda, Szepetynski, was fond of repeating that saying. But one would have had to see him at the moment when, surrounded by a host of noble guests, many of whom barely managed to stay on their feet and thought they had windmills instead of heads on their shoulders — that’s how the old Hungarian wine roared and whirled in their heads — one would have had to see old Szeptynski at such a time, when he was leading his guests about his new castle and showing them the spacious, French-style household buildings, full of modern equipment, when he was showing the strong palisade and the iron-mounted gates, the moats and the pond that surrounded the castle from the south like a huge crescent, when he was leading them through the dense, semi-natural park that nestled up to the newly-built castle from the north — one would have had to see all that with his own eyes to be in a position to picture the expression on the face of the voyevoda as he repeated at such moments:

“My home is my castle!”

The guests were amazed. The ladies, dressed according to the fashion of that day in gowns of fine muslin gauze, oh’ed and ah’ed sentimentally, pretentiously pressing their thin lips together and viewing the beautiful neighborhood through their binoculars. All were astonished by the beauty of the building, which had been built by an Italian master,

by its wonderful location between the forest and the water, by the strong fortifications, by the boats, artistically fashioned into fantastic shapes, which rocked on the smooth surface of the pond, and by the tastefully decorated bowers in the park — in brief, they expressed wonder at everything that could be praised. And if some of the older gentlemen threw in such words as: “Why build such costly fortifications at this time? Of what use is a castle in our present times of peace, of what use moats, a drawbridge and palisades?” — the voyevoda, drawing up his tall, proud figure and pointing haughtily at his own breast, said with a pleased smile:

“My home is my castle! Can it be that you don’t perceive the lofty aim which guided me in building this castle?”

The guests were silent and shook their heads, only the ladies rustled their long, gauze gowns, light as spider webs, as they turned this way and that, showing off to one another.

“Gaze at those blue mountains, dreaming in the distance! What you see is the gateway by which the Hungarians have often entered our country. Rakoczy once invaded us through there! My castle is designed to close the gates to them. Look at the vast plains, wide and level, to the east and to the north! That was the road by which the Tatar swarms of destruction raided our prosperous Foothills. My castle will bar the road to the Moslem raiders and will provide a haven for the poor people escaping with their goods from the fire and sword of the infidels!”

Thus spoke the voyevoda and with these words his figure, weighted down with age, became erect and seemed to grow. He smiled again with satisfaction and looked haughtily at his guests.

The guests then began to praise the lofty patriotic aims of the castle’s owner, wishing him happiness and to his family glory and long sway.

But the voyevoda’s jubilation was disturbed by mention of his family. He remembered that he had no son, that his famous family name would die with him — and he dropped his proud head again to his breast, as though bowing to the

hand of fate. For, truly, fate seemed to have determined to bow that strong, haughty head. His son, the father's whole hope, perished suddenly during a hunt, having lived but a year with his wife, and the young widow soon followed him to the grave. The inconsolable old man was left only with his wee granddaughter Emilia, but for some reason he couldn't concentrate all his love on her. Sorrow over the death of his son soon gave way to highflown, glory-seeking ideas, to measures to build the castle, to thousands of fancies and plans, which buzzed about in that proud old head. In the meantime, Emilia was growing up under the care of a nurse and a Frenchwoman, the governess Charlotte. She was three and a half years of age at the time when the events we are describing took place.

This was in the second half of the 18th Century, when Stanislaw Poniatowski wore the Polish crown and the charming Marquise de Loully ruled Poland, or rather, the minds of the young Polish men and women, beginning with the king.

It happened one lovely summer evening on a Sunday. Father Isadore, the priest of the village next to the castle, was making a tour of inspection of his broad fields, which were blooming with tall grain and green wheat, waving his silver-ornamented cane as he walked. A light, satisfied smile lit up his features, and as he moved the evening breeze gently played with the flaps of his long black cassock. The silver mounting on the cane glistened in the sun, and the priest's full round face became still ruddier in the evening glow. It is hard to guess what Father Isadore was thinking about at this moment. Perhaps he wasn't thinking about anything, just quietly enjoying the evening hush during his promenade.

"Glory to Jesus Christ!" a bass voice suddenly was heard behind Father Isadore. He turned and replied:

"Glory forever."

Before him stood a man about fifty years of age, with a tanned face, and more than a head taller than Father Isadore. In the lines of his countenance, apart from manly

energy, and a goodnatured but proud smile, which spoke of his consciousness of superiority over other people, there was nothing to indicate unfriendly intentions.

“Reverend father, pardon me for thus unexpectedly crossing your path, but I have immediate business with you, you see.”

Father Isadore took two steps backward in order to view the stranger better and measured his tall figure with curious eyes.

“I presume that you know me, reverend father?”

“No, I don’t know you!”

“Oh, if that is the case,” the stranger said with a playful smile, “I’ll introduce myself. I am Oleksa Dovbush.”

These brief words had a strange effect on Father Isadore. His healthy, ruddy face turned pale, his knees began to tremble, and his hand spasmodically squeezed the silver handle of the cane.

“So,” Dovbush continued, evidently pleased with the change that had taken place on the face of the priest, “my business, reverend, is this. I live in the forests, like the birds of the sky, which neither plough, nor do they sow . . . But for several days now my comrades and I have vainly begged God to give us our daily bread. So I am turning to you and beg of your generous hand to feed the hungry!”

The smile of self-satisfaction disappeared from the dread outlaw’s face, giving way to irony and contempt. He knew that Father Isadore was very miserly and that his words had frightened him greatly. And actually, when he heard the request, Father Isadore cowered and his tongue babbled incoherently:

“What’s that, what? Explain more clearly. I don’t quite understand!”

“It’s very simple. You, father, will be so good to lay a table at your place between eight and ten o’clock for me and twenty of my brave lads, for we have nowhere to dine! Don’t go to too much bother, for we’ll eat anything at all, my boys are that hungry! Good day!”

And the chieftain, bowing and once more glancing mock-

ingly at Father Isadore, who was scared stiff, rapidly went away.

\* \* \*

Voyevoda Szepetynski was in rare good humour that evening. The guests had just departed and the servants were tidying up in the spacious roofs. The voyevoda slowly paced up and down his study, stopping after every step and writing various signs with his finger in the air, some sort of imaginary words and numbers, and often even the sound of indistinct words escaped from his lips. The old Hungarian wine, which had flowed freely that day, had warmed up the aged blood and awakened good humour in him. He kissed his lovely four-year-old granddaughter thrice from good spirits and expressed his appreciation to Mademoiselle Charlotte for taking such fine care of her. Then he retired to his study and shut himself in.

It was not that he intended to get down to some work that demanded quiet. . . . He was pacing the study, which was furnished with exquisite taste, but his thoughts were lost in bold calculations, in vast plans for the future. His wealth was very great, the walls of the castle protected tremendous treasures; his servants were loyal, and his subjects were compelled to put their hands to work for him at any hour of the day, leaving their own tasks, no matter how urgent.

Suddenly someone rapped loudly on the door of the study and the voice of the lackey, announcing the arrival of Father Isadore, was heard. Pan Szepetynski respected neither religion nor its servants, and above all, he did not respect Father Isadore, whose stinginess was known to him. He always looked at him with contempt and never called him anything but "God's slave."

Father Isadore entered the governor's study, pale, panting and all a tremble.

"What do you want, God's slave? Ho, what do I see! You are so wrought up, so worried. A thievish servant must have stolen a piece of bread from your locked food bin without your knowledge? Or maybe, God forbid, you accidentally lost ten zlotys? What?"

This jeering speech of Pan Szepetynski completely confused Father Isadore and set him floundering.

"No, Your Excellency," he said and his tongue was as though it were made of wood, "it's ten times worse! . . ."

"God!" the voyevoda cried with comic pathos. "The hoops must have burst on the barrel of the oldest wine in your cellar! But there, God's slave, I can't help you — what Mother Earth has guzzled, you can't pull out of her throat!"

But the thought of the terrible outlaws having again struck him like a bolt of lightning, his presence of mind returned to Father Isadore and with shaking lips he told the voyevoda what was the matter.

You should have seen Pan Szepetynski at that moment, as he was listening to Father Isadore's story. His comic pathos disappeared like mist before a strong wind, and his eyes glittered with jubilation.

"Mad dogs, base hounds!" he shouted. "They dare to roam about in my vicinity and even to assault people!

"Hey, the first thing tomorrow I will order a gallows to be put up by the pond. They'll soon be swinging from them, together with their chief!"

"Boys, this way!" the voyevoda cried, opening the door wide. "Hey, run and arm yourselves, pick up ropes and lassos! Faster, you goats, faster!"

The mob of servants that had run up at voyevoda's shout and stood a minute gaping at him, ran off just as fast, understanding now what was up and what was to be done.

"Father Isadore, rush home, prepare the supper . . . dine them . . . and I'll treat them to wine from my cellars."

"But, Your Excellency, I'm a poor servant of God, how can I afford to put on a feast for twenty such bears of the forest?"

"You can't afford to? Well, just as you wish. So far as I am concerned, they can hang you or pour hot coals down your bootlegs, as they have done to more than one of your fraternity. If you are so reluctant to feed them, let it be! It's no concern of mine."

"But . . . for the love of God . . . Your Excellency . . . don't let a man perish for no fault of his!"

"Then do as I say!"

"But . . ."

"No buts! That's how it must be and that's final. Don't you know that a reward of a thousand chervintsi has been placed on the head of Oleksa Dovbush? When I get him in my hands, the reward will go to you! Go and prepare the supper!"

Father Isadore, it seemed, was just waiting for this. Now happy, he bowed to the voyevoda's knees and left for the village, counting in fancy those beautiful chervintsi. But the chervintsi were like the proverbial pears that grow on a willow tree! Whenever the Polish government, the Polish senate or the Polish nobility promised anything, it was nothing but a promise and nothing ever came of it.

Meanwhile, Pan Szepetynski, elated, paced the spacious, luxurious rooms and rubbed his hands together with jubilation that fate had delivered into his hands the famous outlaw, who for some years now had been spreading panic among the gentry of the neighborhood.

Night was falling. The voyevoda, surrounded by his mob of armed servants, quietly sallied forth, skirted the village and moved in the direction of Father Isadore's residence, in order to fall on the outlaws suddenly as they were eating their supper and thus seize them with the greatest of ease. For one moment the thought worried Pan Szepetynski that he had not left enough guards at home; but he soon reminded himself that this wasn't necessary.

"Ho, my home is my castle. Forward, lads!"

Night fell and blanketed the broad fields, through which their path lay, with thick grey mist. The foothills forest looked blue in the distance. The loud croaking of the frogs in the master's pond carried far. Shortly, Pan Szepetynski and his servants had disappeared in the midst of that great, vital, wonderful Nature.

Hey, Sir Voyevoda, vainly are you placing your servants around the manse to carry out your sly design! Vainly are

you setting a snare for the beast! This beast won't be caught in it.

Proud old-head, in vain do you imagine the thanks which your neighbors will shower on you for catching the famous outlaw! Your efforts to lure him into the trap are useless! Watch that you yourself don't get caught in a net, the smart one letting himself be outsmarted.

And you, Father Isadore, in vain you rejoice and count ahead of time the chervintsi which the Polish government will pay you for Dovbush's head! Wasted were your efforts, slave of God, to provide such a fine supper! Dovbush's brave lads will sup elsewhere — and it will be a rare feast!



The voyevoda's new castle stands silent and dismal between its double coronet: the dark forest, and the pond that shines blue like a giant crescent. Only the drawbridge hangs, lost in thought, over the deep castle moat; from the turrets the mouths of the cannon peer out, while the golden stars of the heavens splash in the pond like enchanted nymphs-rusalki, who want to lure into the water's depths the thick lindens and weeping willows, which sit on the banks around the pond, sadly looking at themselves in its crystal waters. Only from time to time a merry fish splashes among the ripples and then the rings spread wider and wider, until they reach the green banks.

Inside the castle, the maids and servants are gathered in the large kitchen around the stove, waiting for the master's return, and shorten the time with conversation. Little Emilia and Mademoiselle Charlotte are asleep in their quarters and no rattling or noise interferes with their slumbers. The conversation in the kitchen becomes ever more lively. The girls and the older women, the shepherds and the old men relate the rumours about Dovbush.

"He must be a terrible man!" Senka, a young girl, whispered timidly.

"Go on, you silly," spoke up Klim, an old man with long Cossack moustaches, "you would go through three-day fasts

seven times and bow to the floor on seven Fridays if such a handsome lad courted you!"

"Go on with you and your courting! Go away! Such an old man and yet the foolishness hasn't gone from your head!" Senka said crossly, blushing with shame.

"So you say, Hrits, that you have seen Dovbush?" Paraska, the cook, asked a short, broadshouldered lad.

"Hoho," he said saucily, "there's nothing hard about seeing him! I saw him in our own forest many the time."

At that moment something strange clanged and rustled in the castle yard . . . All pricked up their ears, expecting to hear the voyevoda's halloo, but nothing more was heard. Not one of the servants went out to see what was there. They all continued to listen to Hrits's story.

"But how did he look, that terrible robber?" Senka asked Hrits.

"How should he look? The same as any Christian."

At that moment something scraped at the door. Loud steps were heard, the door opened, and the tall figure of Dovbush appeared.

"Good evening," he said, without bowing. "Did Dovbush look like me?" he added with a smile, turning to Hrits.

It is difficult to describe the alarm of the servants when they suddenly saw the dread outlaw before their eyes. They could not have got more frightened if a bolt of lightning had struck inside the house at that moment. In a trice saucy Hrits was under a trestle-bed in the darkest corner. The women screamed and were rooted to the spot. Only old Klim grabbed an axe.

"Drop it, old man," Dovbush told him with a smile. "We did not come here to do you any harm. Now, if you please, help us to truss up the servants, and when everything is done, you'll show us the master's strongbox."

"You won't live to see it, damned robber!" shouted Klim and rushed at him with the axe.

"Hey, boys!" shouted Dovbush. Immediately the door flew open and Klim felt somebody grasp his hands as though in a vice. Having trussed him up and gagged him, they

carried him out into the yard, and the rest of the servants followed, even Hrits, who had hidden under the trestle-bed. One powerful outlaw stood guard over them.

“If anyone so much as makes a peep, I’ll shatter his head with a bullet like a squash.”

The poor servants, terrified and trussed up, did not even dare to open their mouths. Only Klim kicked and threshed about, but he couldn’t shout because there was a gag in his mouth.

Meanwhile the outlaws were busy in the castle. Here they are, carrying out Mademoiselle Charlotte, who was half asleep, and laughing at her terror. But what novelty has the chief thought up? Is that a treasure that he is hiding under the folds of the wide gentleman’s cloak he has thrown over his shoulders? Carefully carrying out that treasure, he stood in the middle of the courtyard and cried:

“Is there money, boys?”

“There is, chief, there is!” answered a confusion of voices from the hallway, and in a moment outlaws appeared, bearing the governor’s strongbox.

“Did you take what is necessary?” the chief asked again, by “what is necessary” meaning jewelry and other things that robbers need.

“We did, we did!” again shouted several voices. And again outlaws came out of the castle, toting a chest full of the master’s valuables.

“Forward! Take the goods to the hiding place! Tomorrow we divide them, by daylight!”

The outlaws, jubilantly whispering among themselves, started on their journey. The chief held back a minute longer, still holding on to his loot.

“Shouldn’t we place a red banner on the castle for the voyevoda?” asked the outlaw, who was standing by the trussed servants, with a cruel but calm smile.

“Go to it!”

The darkness of night covered the earth. Dovbush walked from the yard and, putting the folds of the cloak aside a little in order to get a closer look at his loot, he said:

“And so, Sir Voyevoda, we have settled accounts at last! Ah, that was long overdue! When your son kidnapped and dishonored my Olesya, when you yourself, finding me in the wood, had me mercilessly flogged, when you ruined my happiness, my whole life, no doubt you never thought that the time would come when I would repay you and even up the score, that I would seize the last of your kin and destroy all your plans and hopes! My revenge will soon be glowing on the magnificent roof of your new castle!”

And carefully carrying little Emilia, wrapped in the skirts of his cloak, the outlaw disappeared in the dark of the night among the winding paths of the governor's park.

The dark night soon smiled. The black clouds in the sky became ashamed of their blackness and blushed red. The fish awoke in the pond and began to swim, splashing, closer to the rosy light. They thought that the sun was rising.

The proud new castle of the voyevoda was afire.

Oh, but Pan Szeptynski's return from his campaign was without gladness or rejoicing! His detachment was not returning in marching order, and not to rest! The whole village was stirred up. A mass of people was gathered around the site of the fire, and Pan Szeptynski, silent and pale, pushed his way through the mass of people. Misfortune broke his prideful spirit at once. Everything, all that he dreamed of and wanted for his old age, on which his heart had become so strongly set, all was now being blown away by the winds and falling to the earth with the ashes of the fire. His famous breed would end with him and his future duty—that of defending the Foothills from invaders—was disappearing as the flames were disappearing in the depths of the dark dome of heaven. Those insatiable assailants, the outlaws, had taken everything from him, everything!

They led the voyevoda to the village for the night. He no longer had the strength to get there by himself. The next day the sun rose bright and clear. Szeptynski was smiling. He took ducats from his pocket and, laughing, played with them like a child. He ran to and fro with

happy laughter, then sat down again; he held his grey head with both hands and in a trembling voice wailed some happy song.

They said that he had lost his reason.

# A Tale About Prosperity

КАЗКА ПРО ДОБРОБИТ

### A TALE ABOUT PROSPERITY

This is a sample of Ivan Franko's social satire. In this tale he shows the consequences of the seizure of Galicia (Rus) by the Austrian empire, with the appropriation of lands by Austrian German landowners and the robbery of the population to feed the insatiable military and government apparatus.

ONCE UPON A TIME there was Prosperity. I don't know whether any of you remember him personally, so I'll describe him for you as the late departed, my grandmother's aunt's uncle, described him to me.

Old Prosperity was a completely immoral individual. His main principle was: if you have it, spend it! And since he was Prosperity from birth, he always had what it takes to spend. He loved to eat hearty—and how!—and so he carried such a pot in front of him that he saw his knees only in dreams and in the blessed memories of his youth. And as to ale and mead and all that's to drink—well, he never spilled it over the fence either, which was noted even by the revered chronicler Nestor, who penned this footnote regarding him: "The Rus are fond of drink."

It should be taken for granted, of course, that he was lazy; how, look you, could a person with a belly like that, and with fumes in his head from drink, get down to work! And then, why should he toil when he was Prosperity and the devil himself, probably, kept him supplied with money! But when it came to fighting, quarreling and love-making, he was terribly hot-blooded, and as for his pride, I won't even talk about it. In a word, as there are the seven main sins, all seven of them were inscribed, you might say, on his red, puffy countenance and in his small eyes, which were creased in fat.

It used to be that this apparition would wander about our land, so puffed up with pride that he couldn't spit over his thrust-out lower lip, breathing in gasps, and wherever he roamed there sprang up rye and wheat and grasses on the farm lands, dark and boundless forests spread on all sides, and the rivers and ponds teemed with fish—in a word, there was prosperity. And he just promenaded about and sang lustily:

*Where's the homeland of the Rus?  
Where the wheat and rye are lush,  
Where the finest barley's grown  
And where famine is unknown.  
There where life is good to us,  
There's the homeland of the Rus!*

The reverend father kept telling him:

"Repent and mend your ways, fellow, or you'll come to a bad end!"

But he wouldn't even bend an ear in that direction!

"What do I care!" he would answer. "After all, I'm Prosperity! I'd sooner let them do away with me altogether than change my nature!"

"And do you think they won't do away with you?"

"Ha, let them just try!" shouted Prosperity. "Who would dare?! Why, that's a dangerous thing to attempt, it savours of prison!"

"You'll see! There will be people found who will dare, and they won't be punished for it either."

"Eh," said Prosperity, "fear the wolves and stay out of the woods! Of course, we'll all die some day and fly into the devil's maw, but who's going to worry on that account now! What was—that we have seen, and as for what will be—nobody knows, not even you, reverend father. Let us rather drink down a good draught and sing so that the echoes ring from the mountains:

*I will never fade away,  
For I keep my people gay!  
Sing la-la and sing hey-hey!  
For I keep the people gay!*

That's how Prosperity made merry, without a thought in his head. Then boom! One day, like a bolt from the blue, a summons arrived from Herr Hopmann: tomorrow at eight o'clock in the morning Prosperity must report at his office!

For the first time since his birth, shivers ran up Prosperity's spine. "What can Herr Hopmann want of me? I have paid all my taxes, I'm not suing anyone or being sued by anybody, there's no fine out against me to pay, and just to be sociable to Herr Hopmann—confound it, I have no desire for that at all!" But a summons is a summons, it must be obeyed.

"Glory to Jesus Christ!" he said politely, as he entered the office.

"Ach, goot day, goot day!" Herr Hopmann said. "What peasant are you, und vhat do you vant?"

"Please, sir, I'm Prosperity. You ordered me to report here for some reason. Here is the summons."

"Ja, ja, so you are Brosberity! Goot, goot, Mister Brosberity, sit down yourself! Ve haff something by you to talk."

"By me?"

"Vell, by you, at you, from you, it iss the same all. Tell me, Mister Brosberity, I haff heard you are in charge of the community storehouse for grain?"

"Well, yes, that's so."

"Und there much grain in the storehouse iss?"

"Oh, there's a thousand hundredweight of rye, five hundred or so of wheat, and I figure about fifteen hundredweight of oats."

"Ho, ho, ho! That's goot! Very goot! That's exactly how much ve need."

"You, Herr Hopmann?"

"Nein, not mineself! Our chief from the army writes he iss needing. So you, Mister Brosberity, vill let us that grain for ourselfs take?"

"But . . . but by what right?" Prosperity mumbled, taken aback.

"Now, now, now! Don't think that ve take for nothing! Nein, ve are not like that people. Ve shall a bond giff you, understand?"

"What kind of bond?"

"It iss a paper, you can put it away."

"But can a person eat it, if his bread runs out?"

"Ach, you're a peasant, just a peasant, Mister Brosberity! Hahaha! To eat! You just about eat thinking! But do you know, Brosberity, vot the vaterland iss?"

"No, sir, I do not."

"Oy, oy, oy!" Herr Hopmann shouted and he clasped his head in his hands and began to run around the office. Prosperity thought that Herr Hopmann's tooth had suddenly started to ache, but it was only his way of showing how amazed he was that Prosperity did not know about the "vaterland."

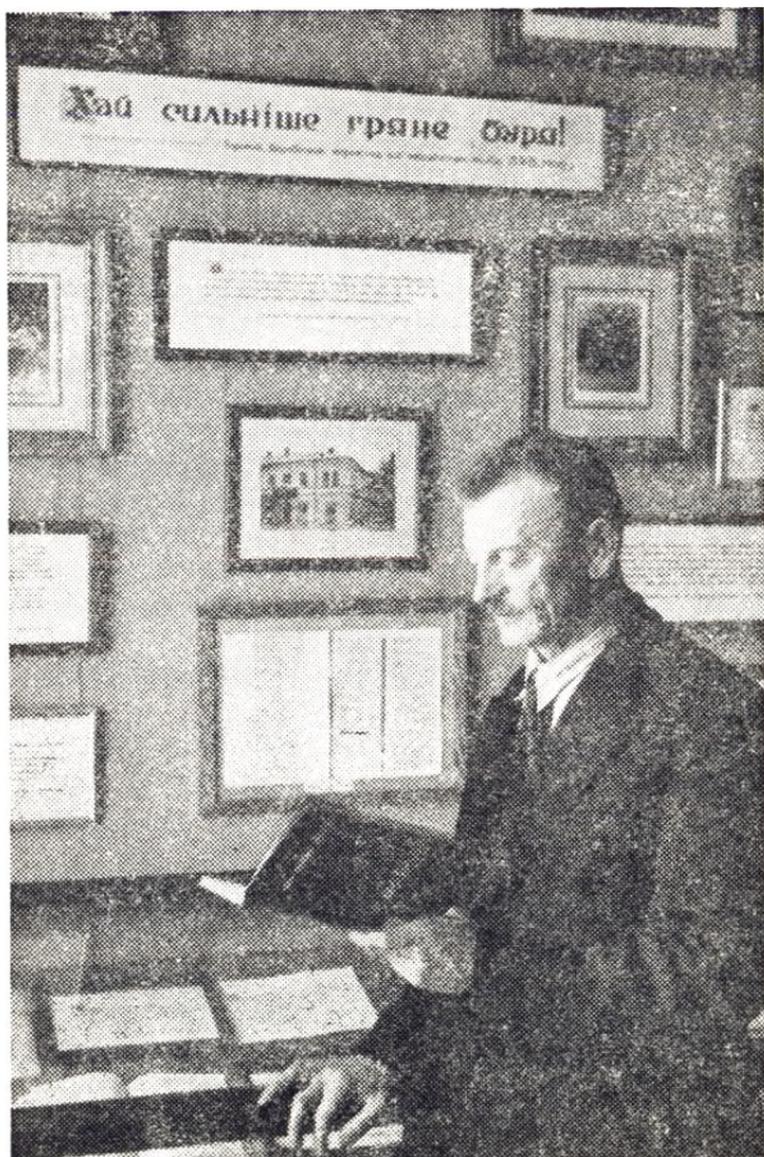
"Vell, listen, Mister Brosberity," said Herr Hopmann, overcoming his pain, "don't comical be! The vaterland iss the army, the superiors und I! For this vaterland every peasant must everything he has giff, und even that not enough would be."

"But, Herr Hopmann, what if I myself die of starvation?"

"Dumbhead peasant! So long as the vaterland is strong, there vill always peasants be! You won't die! And those bonds, about which I told you, they will interest bring you."

"Look, sir, I don't want any interest."

"You don't vant? That's splendid. I vill right away in the records write it down. Und right away I vill send to take the grain away."



*Taras Franko, son of the poet, is today director of the Ivan Franko Museum in Lvov. The museum is located in the home where the poet lived and worked.*

"No, sir, I don't agree to that. What if I get a poor crop, what will I do then?"

"Ach, what iss this nonsense about poor crop! Just you vork goot, und you vill always haff goot crop. I haff heard, Mister Brosberity, that you very lazy are, don't vant to vork! Listen, mine man, don't let me hearing that any more!"

"What business is that of yours, sir?" snapped Prosperity, who was getting good and tired of these lectures. "I don't go to you begging for grain, but here you are coming to me!"

"Vhat? How? You to me dare talk like that?" Herr Hopmann cried. "Hey, guard! Bank heraus! Giff him a few!"

Before our Prosperity knew what was up, a bench had already been put down in the corridor, and a gang of henchmen grabbed him, laid him down on it and gave him such a birching as he had never had in his life before. Then they brought him back to Herr Hopmann.

"Sir," Prosperity began, "by what right . . ."

But Herr Hopmann interrupted him:

"Shut up, peasant, and don't a vord say! Here iss mine right!"

And he banged a huge book, bound in pigskin, with his hand.

"Can you read?"

"No, sir, I can't."

"Vell, so shut up! Here iss mine right, clause umpump-upteen! Now tell me, Mister Brosberity, haff you money?"

"I have a little."

"Vhat does that mean: a little? Tell straight, how much?"

"Well, somewhere around ten thousand."

"Ach, ten thousand! Vhy does a peasant need so much money? Vhat do you do vith it?"

"I put it in the chest and let it lie there. It doesn't ask for food, and in case of a rainy day, God forbid, there it is."

"Did I not say it?" Herr Hopmann cried joyfully. "Dumbhead peasant don't know vhat by money to do! Und the vaterland needs money, much money! Don't be afraid,

Mister Brosberity, you vill not lose it, you vill bonds get."

"Go hang, sir, with your bonds!" Brosberity shouted, beside himself with anger.

"What? How? You dare?" Herr Hopmann foamed. "Guards, giff him!"

After his second birching, our Prosperity became much meeker. The poor fellow realized that Herr Hopmann meant business.

"Are you bonds taking, dumbhead peasant?" Hopmann yelled at him.

"I'll take them, thank you kindly, sir."

"Vell, you should haff said so right off! Und now listen, peasant! I haff heard that you haff goot horses."

"I do, if you please, sir."

"How many?"

"Ten teams."

"Ten teams! Haff you crazy gone! Why you so many horses need?"

"Well, sir, it's like this. I raise them myself. If I get a good bargain, I sell them, and if not, let them graze."

"Listen, Mister Brosberity, the vaterland needs horses for war. Two pair for you enough iss, und for the rest ve vill a receipt giff you."

"What good is a receipt to me?"

"Hide it! Some day, when there iss much money in the treasury you vill get paid. I vill order the horses to be taken away."

Prosperity only scratched his head, and kept silent.

"Listen, Mister Brosberity," Herr Hopmann continued, "you haff much land?"

"Not much, but enough for my wants."

"Dumbhead peasant, I don't ask you that, but how many morgs?"

"How many more?" enquired Prosperity.

"Oy, oy, oy!" Herr Hopmann cried again as though he had the toothache. "Vhat a dumbhead peasant this iss! He

doesn't even what a morg iss know! How did you measure your land?"

"We measure by the prut, sir."

"Haff you many pruts?"

"Something around a hundred."

"Vell, nix traus von't be. I vill a new survey order. You haff too much land. Twenty for you enough iss. The rest ve vill sign over to mine brother Von Draussen."

Prosperity's eyes became as big as saucers.

"Und listen, you! Do you much taxes pay?"

"Oh, sir, I pay a lot, ten copper dutkas from every prut of land."

"Hahaha! Und this you call a lot? Hahaha! From today you vill five silver coins from every morg pay, you understand?"

"No, I don't understand."

"Vell, please yourself. You vill understand soon enough. Und now, where you your cattle pasture?"

"In the woods."

"Whose iss the voods?"

"God's, I presume."

"Vhat? How iss Gott's?"

"Like that. The gentry say the woods belong to them, and the peasants say the woods are theirs. And I say only one thing: neither the gentry, nor the peasants planted them, so they are God's. And as for using them for pasturing cattle, we do it."

"Iss verboten to pasture cattle in the voods! Voods belong to the gentry! Here the certificate of deed iss!" Herr Hopmann shouted.

"But what will I do with my cattle, especially now that you've taken away so much of my land as well?"

"Do vhat you like! Butcher them, or keep them in the barn, but to pasture in the voods verboten iss," Hopmann yelled.

"No, sir!" Prosperity also yelled, sensing that everything

was turning upside down in his innards. "Do what you will with me, but I'm going to stand up for the cattle, and I won't back down. You can't do that! That's the last straw!"

"Shut up, dumbhead peasant, und go home!" Hopmann stamped with his foot.

"No, sir, I won't shut up and I won't go away from here. That deed certificate must be revoked!"

"Vhat? How? You dare? Guards, giff him!"

"Beat me as much as you will," Prosperity cried, "beat me to death, but I won't give in!"

"Giff him und lock him up!" Herr Hopmann ordered. and went home to lunch. "Pfui, wie man sich mit diesen dummen Bauern herumplagen muss!" he sighed as he left the government building.

Prosperity got whatever was coming to him in that part of the anatomy from which the legs grow, and spent half a year in jail to boot, until Herr Hopmann remembered him and ordered him released. Pulling his sheepskin cap down to his very eyes, and looking neither to the right nor to the left, he hurried home.

At home he found things in such a mess that he barely recognized his own four walls.

There is no record in the history books about what happened to him next. It is difficult to trace now, whether he died, or became regenerated. In any case, the Prosperity who dwells in our midst today and whom we all know so well, bears no resemblance whatever to the other, old one. Our Prosperity is quiet, meek, labour-loving, thrifty, and moral to his fingertips—in short, the exact opposite of the old one. The main thing about our present Prosperity is that he acts only with permission and under instructions from above. Several times already it seemed that it was all over with him, but always the order came just in time: Prosperity must remain! And so we have him with us to the present day, thank God. He doesn't have a trace of his old

sinful nature. Except that sometimes in his sleep, he mumbles the first line of the song, and that to a mournful tune:

*Where's the homeland of the Rus?*

He can't recall the other lines, even though you kill him.

Serf's Bread

ПАНЩИЗНЯНИЙ ХЛІБ

### THE SERF'S BREAD

For stark portrayal of the horrors of serfdom—which was in full force in Ukraine right up to the middle of the 19th Century—this story has few equals in Ukrainian (or any other) literature. It is given here slightly abridged.

*(A story told by a man who still remembered serfdom.)*

I WAS STILL a youth when serfdom was abolished. I only did corvee labour for three years. But I'll remember those three years as long as I live. Those were terrible times, sir!

Don't ask me to tell you how things were here before 1848! Suffice it to tell you that there wasn't a single wagon in the whole village. The landlord alone had wagons, while the peasants had only sleighs. In the summer they carried the dead to the graveyard in sleighs.

Of course, to the dead it was all the same. But how did the living live? My father was from Medika originally. He had two brothers, and the three of them were handsome, capable lads. The master took one into the manor as his lackey, took him along with him to Brodi and there lost him to another landlord at cards. There is now a family of Kritskys in the Brodi district, they are our relatives. The master returned home and took the second brother into service in the manor, took him along with him to Warsaw, and that one, too, disappeared somewhere. My father saw that the same was in store for him, so he escaped here, to Turki. This village was under the same landlord, so to say, but a little farther away from the master's presence, and somehow he got away with it. My father had a hard life, he married a poor girl, they couldn't make a living as it was, and yet they were driven to do corvee labour. I had barely reached

twelve when I too had to go to work without pay on the landlord's estate. Oh, but I experienced every kind of suffering during those three years! . . . But it isn't about myself that I want to tell you.

There was a poor, unfortunate man in our village, Onopry by name. He was truly poor and unfortunate. Today there are people who appear even poorer, and yet they manage to live on the earth, people with only a hut and not a foot of land. Even tenants look like human beings among the people. In those days it was different. Onopry had a shanty, he had a wee garden and a bit of field. Today he'd be a farmer of sorts, but then he was called a "pawn." I still remember him clearly as though it were today. He was hunched over, his eyes fallen deep in their sockets, his face the hue of the earth, he walked barefoot summer and winter, without a hat or a cap — at least, I never saw his head covered with anything. His shirt was coarse, made of sack-cloth, and black as the ceiling in a house where there is no chimney. Over his shirt he wore an old, tattered coat of worsted, which had rotted at the bottom, and which he belted with bast or a straw-band. That was all the clothing he had, winter or summer. He always walked bent over, always slowly, barely crawling, and he always was chewing something in his mouth, and he always was hungry. We, the boys, as we were tending the master's sheep or doing some other chore, often teased him and made fun of him. He never got angry, never raised his voice, but always replied to us humbly and in a servile and depressed voice:

"All right, children, all right! Have your fun. But give me a piece of bread, if you have any, for I swear that I haven't had a bite in my mouth this day as yet . . ."

"What are you always chewing, Onopry?" we would ask.

"Eh!" he would answer unwillingly, and dropping his head, he would sigh heavily.

"Onopry chews his cud! Chews his cud!" one of the shepherds would usually yell. Others would pick it up, and laughter would resound over the pasture-land, but Onopry wouldn't do anything, except turn away and hobble off to his

work. Only once I saw him stealthily wiping his eyes with the grimy sleeve of his sackcloth.

He had a bad wife, so they said in the village. You couldn't tell that from her appearance, for she was a handsome woman, healthy, red-cheeked and jolly. It was only later that I came to understand what evil fate had paired them off. Onopry had stayed single a long time, he worked at the manor and had nothing of his own, when suddenly the master ordered him to marry Marta. That was a great misfortune for him for Marta took him under her feet, trampled him, pushed him down into the earth, starved him, even — so it was told — beat him in the evenings, and herself ran after the men at the manor. With such a wife Onopry soon aged, became hunchbacked, got yellow and withered, turned to "goose air," as they said in the village.

I don't know under what clause it was, but suffice it to say that although he was a farmer, so to speak, not a hired man, Onopry did corvee labour practically every day. It seems that his wife drove him herself to work beyond the prescribed days. But what sort of work was it? The poor soul didn't have the strength of a beetle, and unless others helped in the field or in the barn, the overseer didn't spare the whip, but beat him and kicked him until the old man's bones rattled. And he would take it without a peep from his lips. Often it looked as though he would never rise after such an inhuman beating, that all his bones were broken, — but no! He would lie there a bit, and then he'd get up and begin to slowly potter about again as though he were doing something, no faster and no better than before the beating.

One time — I remember it as though it were today, and I won't forget it to the day I die — it was around noon. They were harvesting the wheat at the time. They drove a mass of people onto the master's wheat fields. They had already finished gathering in the crop on one field and they had to go to another field, far away at the other end of the village, on the other side of the road. Don't think, sir, that it was so simple to go from one field to another. Today people go from field to field, their sickles shining in the sun, while

they breathe deep, straighten out their spines, call out to one another, greet each other, joke or ask about one another's health. But not in those days. The masters always needed their overseers: "You don't know how to keep order, you waste a lot of time crawling from one field to another." And the overseers? Well, they were mounted on horses, and they had whips in their hands . . . As soon as one field was done, they immediately hollered:

"Come on, full speed to the other field! Hurry up!"

And they would start their horses running and drive before them all the reapers, old and young, scorching hot and thirsty, in the dust, or in the rain. Tired from their heavy labour, without a chance to rest up, the people ran as fast as they could. Naturally, the young and the strong ran ahead, shouting, hooting, and laughing, so that from far-off you would have thought that a wedding party had set off racing across the fields. But the pregnant women, the old grannies and the children couldn't keep up the pace and would be left behind. Oh, but their lot was bitter! From behind the overseer on his horse rained blows of the whip right and left, not caring whether he struck a back or a head. The poor things ran, fell into ditches and tripped over furrows, often dropping beneath the horses' hooves. Oh, sir, how many times I saw pregnant women fall like that, and when they got up their blouses were criss-crossed with red stripes! That was the whip, cutting into the flesh right through the cloth.

So, one time they were driving the people like that from one field to another. The folk ran along through the fields, panting, flushed, covered with dust, their eyes red from the intense heat. I was standing beside the road, pasturing the master's horses on the fallow-land. The young men raced past me first, then came the girls, then the older men, and at the very back the oldsters were heavily pounding with their feet. Onopry was among them, and he got left behind until he was the very last. You could see his knees wobbling under him and his open mouth striving to snatch as much air as possible. But it was no use, the poor fellow couldn't



catch up to the rest. The overseer on his horse was practically on top of him. In another second the shout came:

“Faster, you scum, faster!”

Simultaneously came the whistle of the whip, which flashed in the air like a black snake and then wound itself about Onopry’s legs, which were bare up to his knees. There was a slight snap, the whip flashed in the air again, and again it wound itself around the old man’s bare legs. He groaned and fell to the ground, and two wide red rings immediately came out on his legs, and blood began to seep from them.

The overseer halted his horse.

“Get up, you tramp!” he shouted to Onopry.

Slowly, with great exertion, he began to raise himself from the earth. At that moment the whip once more descended on his back. He sagged like a drooping vine, and in that instant something black and hard fell out of his shirt-front and rolled into the ditch. Onopry stretched his hand

out to catch whatever it was he had lost, but he wasn't quick enough.

"What's that?" shouted the overseer, noticing his motion.

"It's . . . it's . . . it's . . ." Onopry babbled.

"Pick it up and give it here!" the overseer yelled.

Still bent over and shivering violently, Onopry crawled into the ditch, picked up and handed what had fallen out of his shirt-front to the overseer. The overseer long studied this object, while Onopry stood before him, his head bare and his hands crossed on his chest as though in prayer. I couldn't tear my eyes from his feet. His knees were continually shaking, as they do when a man is very cold, and the blood flowed in tiny streams from the circles on the thin, dirt-caked calves, rapidly soaking into the grey dust of the road.

"What is that?" at last the overseer asked Onopry.

"It's . . . it's . . . bread."

"What? Bread?"

"Well, yes, my bread. I eat that kind. For other people it's cattle oilcake, but for me, kind sir, it's bread."

The overseer held Onopry's bread in his hand for another minute, he looked it over, he smelled it, and then his hand began to shake and he hurled that bread far off into the field, then quickly took a handkerchief from his pocket and began to wipe his eyes. Even he wept.

You know, sir, they say that the Lord once made a miracle and set stones to weeping. Of course, that was a miracle, divine power. But I, sinner that I am, think that it was a greater miracle when that overseer of ours wept over Onopry's bread. I was small then, fourteen years of age, but when I saw tears in the eyes of that man, who was like a scourge to us, a heartless beast, I felt as though a knife had been thrust into my heart. Until then I hadn't understood a thing, hadn't given anything a thought; if I was ordered to work, I worked; if I was beaten, I suffered it, because I saw others doing the same. I never even thought whether it could be otherwise, didn't even understand whether it was good or bad. To the contrary, I had often been told



*Scene from the film version of Franko's drama "Stolen Happiness," produced by the Kiev Film Studios in Ukraine*

that it must be so, that God had willed it, that the peasants were lazy and had to be driven to work. But those overseer's tears immediately turned everything upside down in my soul. I saw that there must be a horrible evil, a terrible wrong in the world, if even such a beast had been compelled to weep over it.

The overseer stayed silent a moment, wiped his eyes again with the handkerchief, and then he took a coin out of his purse, threw it to Onopry, and said:

"Here, take that! Go to the inn! Buy yourself some bread! And come to work right away!"

And without further ado he turned his horse around and galloped after the reapers, while Onopry, hanging his head and not even looking to his bleeding legs, tramped down the road to the village. When he had gone a long way, I picked up that "bread" and hid it in my shirt-front. At first I intended to show it to the other boys, so they could see what sort of cud old Onopry had been chewing every day, but when I held that cattle-cake in my hand, such pity came over me that I, too, bawled like a baby out there in the middle of the field, among the master's horses. When I came home that evening, I hid that cattle-cake in a hiding-place in the verge of the thatched roof, and I've kept it to this day, and will leave it to my grandchildren, so they may be reminded of what once was.

# Forests and Pastures

ЛІСИ І ПАСОВИСЬКА

## FORESTS AND PASTURES

While in such countries as France the abolition of feudalism was accomplished by revolution and the estates of the nobility were taken away from them and divided up among the peasants, in Austria this was done "from the top"—by the old rulers themselves, under pressure of the masses of the people. While doing away with feudal privileges, therefore, they took care to leave the old landlord class in possession of the bulk of the land and even managed to transfer to them such pastures and forests as from time immemorial had been the commons, that is, the joint property of the given community. In this story Ivan Franko describes how this robbery was carried out.

In "Forests and Pastures" Franko also shows how some Ukrainian professionals—"patriots" to boot!—helped the Austrian authorities and the Polish gentry to rob the Ukrainian peasants of their rightful property.

"Forests and Pastures" shows how semi-feudal relations remained in western Ukraine even after feudalism was supposedly no more, bringing farm economies to ruin and forcing masses of peasants from the land—to become hired workers on the landlords' estates or to seek survival by emigration to foreign lands.

*(A peasant representative's story.)*

LORD GOD, what a to-do there was here over those forests and pastures! How the gentry twisted this way and that, how they plotted, how they bribed engineers and lawyers, just to be relieved of burdens of various sorts! They were smart. They knew that, though the emperor had granted freedom to the peasants, and abolished serfdom, yet if they didn't give them any forest pasture land, the peasants would either perish on the stump, or else come to them "begging your favours" — and then serfdom would be back, although in somewhat different garb, but no easier on the peasants for that!

And do you think that serfdom has not returned to us? Just come to our village and you'll see for yourself. The overseers and foremen don't come riding up to the houses waving their whips, it's true, and you don't see that oaken log any more in the manor yard, on which the "community birching" used to take place every Saturday, but just take a look at the people and have a talk with them! They're black as the earth, poverty-ridden, and their houses are peeling, old, and leaning over on the sides. There are practically no fences at all, although the village is surrounded by a sea of forest. . . . The cattle are poor and mangy, and anyway, it's a rare farmer that owns any. And if you ask the folks you meet

walking with sickles and scythes, "Where are you going, people?" you may be sure that they'll answer, "To reap grain on the master's field," or "To cut hay in the master's meadow." And if you express amazement that they're off to work for the master at such a time, when they haven't as yet done a thing on their own farms, while the sun is beating down, and their grain is falling off the stalks, they will only shake their heads and sadly say:

"What can we do? We see it ourselves, and our hearts are sore, but nothing can be done! We're in debt to the master, and he has a rule that you must first work out the master's due, even if bolts of lightning were raining down, and only then can you start on your own."

That's how it is every year with us: for the master we do everything on time, and we do it well and clean, while our own crop rots and perishes in the field. Our master figured it out very cleverly. He owns the forest, and we can't even have a stick in the yard without his permission! He owns the pasture land, while most of our cattle died off, and were lost to us, and what's left walk about like ghosts. His fields are cultivated and weeded, while ours are choked with couch-grass, mustard-grass and weeds. We have no manure to improve our soil with, and no yoke-cattle! And even the little that grows on our land is doomed to perish, because we must first work the master's fields, while the weather is good. And so we can never get our own bread, we can never get to stand on our own feet, we can never free ourselves from the master's grip. And the master squeezes us, oh, he squeezes with all his might! He's the chief official of this community now, and one of his toadies is the secretary, and the entire council has to bow to their will. He won't let a poor man out of the village nohow, neither to go to work nor into service—he won't issue him a permit. "Stay here," he says, "don't get uppity, work for yourself!" But of course, there's nothing you can do for yourself, you must go to work for the master! And the master—pooh! ten pennies he pays for a day's work at the most difficult time, and you've got to work, for there's nowhere else to go! That's how he has

us in a vice and keeps squeezing us harder and harder! Figure it out for yourself, in what way could serfdom be worse? I think that the old kind of serfdom, with the overseers and the whips, wasn't as hard to bear as this kind.

Now I'll tell you how he managed to catch us out and get us into his clutches. I myself was a witness to it, and I can tell you exactly what happened, and swear to the truth of every word. Listen!

Our troubles started at the time of the census, the one in 1859, you know. Until then we lived on good terms with the master. He was afraid to pick on us, for the gentry at that time still had the wind up as the result of the Mazur massacre, you know. And we also had no cause to pick on him: we had pasture land, and we cut wood in the forest, as our fathers had done from time immemorial, and it was considered the community forest—we didn't even have a forester to watch it. Suddenly came the news about the census. You know, the people are ignorant, they don't know what's what, so they got frightened. It's just like our peasants to be always afraid that the taxes would be jacked up. That's what happened then: they are going to take a census not only of the people, but of the cattle too! Oh, it's not for nothing . . .

One Sunday, after the ritual, the people came out of the church, as usual, and stood about on the village green and held their meeting. The reeve made whatever announcements he had, and others talked about the harvest . . . Suddenly the master appeared . . . "So and so, gentlemen of the community, there's an important matter coming up, the census. I'm your friend, I'm just a farmer like yourselves now. You know that the emperor has made us all equal, so there no longer are any masters . . ." To put it plainly, he began to feed us balderdash. We opened our mouths to hear a human word out of our master's lips for the first time! "So and so," he went on, "it's a serious matter, this census. Whoever wishes, please come up to my place, I have something important to tell you, how to go about this census." And off he went to the manor. And all of us, as many as

were there, followed. We gathered in the manor yard. He stood on the porch, looked over the people, then he called several of the older ones over to him and they went with him into the manor house. We stood, waiting. Our oldsters came back. "Go on, go on, what did master say, what kind of business is it?" But the oldsters only shook their heads and kept muttering, "That's so, that's so, it's the truth!" and then to us: "Come to the village, why are you raising an uproar in the master's yard? Is this a place for your meetings?" We went.

"As you know, good people," our oldsters began to say when we were again standing on the village green, "the census-takers are coming here tomorrow. So our master, God grant him health, told us to warn the community. 'Be careful', he said, 'in respect to the cattle! They write down the number of your cattle and then they'll put on a tax of a rinsky for every head. If you tell them that you pasture them in the woods, you'll pay a double forest tax too: once for the wood and the second time for using it as a pasture.' So the master advises us to do the following: first of all, not to tell them that we let our cattle pasture in the woods, and also to hide some of the cattle in the forest during all of tomorrow, and to tell the census-takers that we have less cattle than we actually own. 'That's what they're doing in other villages too,' he says. 'And the forest will remain yours as it always has been, for the census has nothing to do with land.'"

Well, we talked it over and decided to do as the master advised us. How foolish we were! If anyone had five head of cattle, he chased three into the woods and left two for show, and whoever had ten head, seven went to the woods and three were left. We packed a whole herd of cattle from the whole village into the forest, in the thickets and jungles, and calmly awaited the census. A man finds it difficult to pay those taxes as it is, and here the master had frightened us yet with these supposedly new taxes, so we had no scruples about simply deceiving the census, so long as we could avoid that tax trouble.

Next day early, about lunch time, the census-takers were already in the village. They were taking count. Well, all of us held fast to what we had agreed to do, giving the lowest figures regarding the number of our cattle, and denying that we pastured cattle in the woods, and we even were glad that the business was going so smoothly. Finally the census-takers went to the master's place. Some of our people went along out of curiosity. In a little while they came running back to the village, all puffed out and frightened . . .

"What have we done?" they shouted. "Something's wrong, there's dirty work afoot! It looks as though the master has tricked us proper . . . He not only registered his own cattle, but ours too, that which is hidden in the forest, and the commission has gone out there!"

Hearing of this outrage, we were petrified. Soon we got together and ran to the forest. The census commission was no longer there. We asked the cowherds what happened and they told us: "They were here, some gentlemen and our master, they wrote something down, counted the cattle, but they didn't question us at all." We hurried back to the village and learned that the commission had already left the manor by a side road. We went after them, and caught up with them in the next villag. Then we began telling them that it was our cattle they had counted in the forest.

"How could it be your cattle, when you yourselves told us you didn't have any more and that you don't pasture cattle in the woods?"

"We did say so, but our master advised us to."

"So what do you want now? Do you want us to take another census, or what? Good day! You have made your bed and now you'll have to lie in it. What's down in writing is finished. Though, as a matter of fact, you have the right of appeal, but we tell you beforehand that an appeal won't help you, only land you in jail for deceiving the emperor's commission."

With that we returned. "It's gone and done with," said we, "we'll see what comes of it."

We waited one year, then another, and nothing happened.

The master was on good terms with us again, only if the census was ever mentioned, he would smile and say: "It was just a joke!"

The third year we heard that some sort of commission was coming to the village to measure off the commons pasture land.

"What the devil!" we thought to ourselves, "what is this and what for? The pasture land is ours from time immemorial, why measure it off?" It's true that in recent years we had divided up one corner of it among the farmers of the community and ploughed it up: maybe they were coming to measure how much we had ploughed and how much was still left . . . The commission went straight to the manor house; they had lunch, and then went directly to the pasture land. They laid out a map, and the master himself walked about and pointed out to them how much of it was the pasture, and what we'd ploughed up. We just stood on the sidelines and watched. Then they began to drive stakes into the ground.

We approached the commission, then, bowing from far-off, and then came closer and bowed again, but the commissioners wouldn't even look our way. Finally, the reeve gathered up enough courage and he said:

"Please, sirs, that's our pasture. Why are you measuring and staking it?"

"And who may you be?" the gentlemen asked.

"I'm reeve of the municipality."

"Well, that's fine," they told him and kept on doing what they were at. They put stakes in the ploughed part separately, and the other part separately. We followed them about with the reeve and watched, but we couldn't understand what they were saying because they were chattering in German. At last they finished and got into their carriage. Then one gentleman stood up in the carriage and turned to us.

"People, did you see us measuring off the pasture?"

"We did," we said.

"And did you see us driving the stakes?"

"Yes, we saw that too."

"Do you know that that part over there," — he pointed out to the ploughed part, — "that's yours, the commons, and this over here is the master's?"

"What? How? What's that?" we all shouted, as though someone had poured boiling water on us, and we started after the commission. The commission left hurriedly.

Next day our cowherds drove our cattle to the pasture, but the master's servants were there: "Get out! This is the master's pasture, don't even dare to set foot on it!" The boys turned the cattle away and started to drive them into the woods, but the master's foresters and haiduki were there: "Get out! This is the master's forest, don't dare even to step over the trench!" The cowherds, they were only children after all, began to bawl; they drove the cattle back home. Then such a clamour and lamentation arose in the village, as though somebody had set fire to it from all four corners.

What to do? The women shouted: "We'll go with pokers and stave those master's servants' heads in!" But the older men somehow calmed them down and immediately elected a dozen and more to go away off to Lvov to seek the advice of a lawyer. I was chosen too. We went, and were directed to a lawyer, a Ukrainian, and a noted and sincere one, we were assured. We came to him and told him what was up. "So," said he, "we will take court action. You line up the witnesses and documents, and get the money, and in the meantime behave yourselves, for any rebellious action would only serve to hurt your case."

"But, good sir," we said, "how can we behave calmly, when we have nowhere to pasture our cattle? Without pasture our cattle will die off!"

"Hmmm," said the lawyer, "what help can I offer you for that? When we win the case, the master will be compelled to compensate you for all the losses, but in the meantime watch out for yourselves."

With that we left. The case began. God alone knows how much money we spent on that case. I counted something over seven hundred rinskys just for the lawyer's fee and seals.

The community gave all it could, to the very last farthing, though it came hard. The forest and pasture remained in the master's possession, and right off we were forced to sell the greater half of our cattle at half-price, because we had no feed for them. The rest roamed about, as they are doing to this day, either in the commons we had for the geese, or about the fallows, or in the gardens. As a result our orchards have been ruined, our apiaries abandoned, while our cattle is skin and bones just the same.

Our case dragged along for seven years and it was as though someone was pulling our vitals out all those seven years. During that time we became completely flattened out, but we wouldn't kowtow to the master, we had our dander up. So did he. What kind of courts and institutions our case didn't go to! To the county court, and the provincial court, and the cabinet, and God knows where else! And it went on and on, we would lose in one and appeal to a higher one, we would win in that one and then the master would appeal, and so on without end. Finally—glory be! — we got what we wanted! A government clerk came and brought us a resolution from the highest ministry. Whereas and so forth, in order to resolve the dispute between the village and the manor, a gubernia commission has been appointed, which must review the whole affair on the disputed spot, go over all the documents, hear the witnesses, and bring down a binding verdict. Therefore, both sides are obliged on such a date to appear at the place of the dispute with all their proofs. "Well, glory be!" thought we to ourselves. "We'll get our rights now that the commission will study the matter on the spot. Then everyone will be able to tell them what he knows, each one will get a hearing and in that case they'll have to acknowledge that justice is on our side."

When our master was informed of that same decision, he became very sour and his nose drooped, but later he figured something out and got in his carriage and drove off to Lvov. Nobody knows where he went there, but two of our people, who were in Lvov at the time, later said that they saw him gadding about the city with our lawyer. Of

course, they told us only after it was all over! Enough to say that after two or three days our master returned from Lvov in good humour, even chirpy. We wondered, but we didn't know what it meant.

We also paid a visit to our lawyer. He was very glad to see us. "We'll win the case," he said. "I, myself," said he, "will appear along with you before the commission at the place of the dispute. But the day before the hearing you must come here to me: the reeve, the councilmen and the witnesses, and bring along whatever documents you have, because we must go over it all and get everything lined up. You know how they prepare for a battle in wartime, well, that's how we must prepare. Come early in the morning, and I'll tell each one what he must say, because, you know, the case is complicated, and then in the afternoon we'll get in the wagon and off to the village, to be early on the spot of the dispute on the appointed day."

We took his advice, even thanked him. We got together, the reeve, two councilmen and three of the most respected farmers as witnesses, and we took all the old papers that there were, and at midnight of the day before the commission was to sit in the village, off we went to Lvov. We came early to the lawyer's but were told that he wasn't in, he had gone out somewhere, and would we please wait. We waited and waited—no lawyer. Ten o'clock, eleven, twelve, still no lawyer. We got hungry and went out to the wagon to get a bite to eat. After a minute we ran back—still no lawyer. What could have happened? One o'clock, two already, three—we should have been on our way home already, in order to get there before night, and he was still absent. He finally came later, around four o'clock.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said, "I'm terribly sorry, gentlemen, that I'm so late, but I had a case up in court and the defense lasted up to this time. Please come into my office."

"Maybe it would be better if we got in the wagon and went to the village," said I. "You could look over the documents there, sir, and coach us as to what we should say."

"Oh, there's no hurry," he answered, "we'll get there in good time and it won't take long to go over the documents."

We went with him into his office and sat down. We had brought along a whole armload of documents. He began to read: he read very slowly and meticulously, from time to time asking us questions, and when we had answered him, he read some more—a half hour passed, a whole hour, two hours, and he was still at it. Here we sat, on pins and needles, twisting and sweating, while he kept cross-examining us as though at a hearing, reading those documents and muttering—what a headache! We had already hinted to him several times that it was time we were off, but he kept repeating: soon, soon! And back he went to reading. "Well," we considered, thank the Lord, the reading's done and we'll be off!" Ah, but it was not to be! Now our lawyer began to explain the whole case to us from the very beginning, in all its ramifications, and in great detail, as though we didn't know a thing. He kept talking, and we were practically jumping out of our skins—a man should have stood up right there and then, spit in his face and gone away. But no! Then he began to coach us what we have to say to the commission—and really, he gave us wise counsel! The whole case became so clear to us, and each one knew so well what he was to say, that it was lovely. The only pity was that by the time this coaching was over, nine o'clock had already struck. It was completely dark. And it seemed that he had just become aware of the time, while it also began to thunder outside.

"Hey, what's this, evening already?" he asked, looking around.

"It's evening," said we, feeling like men condemned.

"What shall we do now? How can we travel?"

"I don't know," I answered. "It's difficult to travel now, the road is bad, and it's a long way, through forests! . . ."

"We ourselves don't know what to do," chorused our people.

"At what time is the commission to show up tomorrow?"

"At ten in the morning."

"At ten? Well, then, it's all right. You will sleep over

here, and tomorrow we'll rise early in the morning, and we'll make tracks to the village so fast that we'll raise dust for sure. We'll get there by eight. Go to the inn near my place here, the Jew is a good sort, you'll sleep over there, and tomorrow, remember, don't be late. I'll be waiting for you."

What else was there to do! Willy-nilly, we went. The inn-keeper, it seemed, was waiting for us.

"Are you from the lawyer?" he asked.

"We are."

"Well, well, come in, I'll find room for you, so you can sleep in comfort! Perhaps you need something?"

"Well, give us a portion of whiskey each, so we'll sleep better."

We drank, retired in good time and immediately fell asleep like logs. God knows how long we slept like that. Enough to say that when I awoke it was day. I rushed to the window, looked at the sun—it was long after noon. Oh Lord, what's this? Am I sleeping, or am I awake? I yelled at the top of my voice—no, this was no dream! They jumped up and also rushed to the window. What's this? Already afternoon? Did we really sleep that long? Oh, cruel event! We twisted about like salted leeches, and in addition, each one's head was buzzing and the whole body was sore, as though the bones had all been broken. We called the inn-keeper: "How much do we owe for the night's lodgings?" Not much, only six rinskys." "What? What's that? How can that be?" And he, the brigand, seeing that we were in a rush and chewing our lips with impatience, only stood at the door, smiling and smoothing his beard. "That's what all my guests pay! "

Some of our men began bargaining with him, but no go, he wouldn't let them say a word. We threw him the money, whatever each one wanted to give, and rushed off to the lawyer's. We came there—he wasn't home, he had waited and waited for us in the morning, and then he had gone by himself, leaving word for us to follow as fast as possible. And our documents? He had left the documents, there were our

documents. So there you are! He went, but didn't take the documents. Merciful God, it's awful even to think about what was happening to us then. "They have already decided the case without us," we thought, "and the village has lost. What will the people say to us? What misery awaits us in the future?" It was as though we could look ahead and see what was in store for us, and truly, it was no longer difficult to imagine what was to be!

We raced home, and went not to the village, but straight to the pasture. There was nobody there. And it would soon be evening. We went to the manor—in the manor there was singing, laughter, feasting, music: the master was entertaining the commission. We looked in and there was our lawyer in the salon, red in the face, jolly and talkative. He probably never drank as many glasses of wine in his life as the number of curses that were hurled at him at that moment! We were already bereft of feeling by this time, we didn't speak or ask questions—for why should we? We knew ourselves that our fate was sealed. We stood there like stumps on the verandah, waiting we didn't know for what or for whom. The gentlemen noticed us somehow, and they began to roar with laughter in the salon, but no one came out to us. The master's servants also laughed, poked fun at us and bumped into us as they walked past, but said not a word to us. The master's hounds came up, smelled us, some of them growled and others went away without a sound. And we stood there like lifeless things. It got dark already, the lamps were lighted in the manor, the gentlemen and ladies began to trill some kind of song, rain began to patter outside, and we still stood on that verandah, our eyes glued to the bright window panes, our bodies trembling, desperation in our hearts.

Finally, late at night, the doors opened and the gentlemen began to roll out to the carriages, one by one. The gentlemen of the commission went first. Passing by us, the stoutest of them stopped, glanced at us threateningly and said:

"Who may you be?"

"Local people."

"What do you want?"

"What happened with our case?"

"Your case? So you come now to ask about it? Rotten drunkards! Do you deserve a pasture, do you deserve a forest? You deserve a beggar's bag, that's what! Go home and don't even mention the matter again! The good time is past, it didn't last! Say good-bye to the money, Ivan!"

The whole commission roared with laughter, they got into their carriages and sped away. Our lawyer followed the commission, stealthily like a thief, pretending to be drunk.

"Eh, you here, you here?" he prattled. "I waited for you, honest I did, why didn't you come?"

"Did our landlord pay you much to hold us up in the city while the commission here decided the case in his favour?"

"What? How? Ha! Slander! . . ." he babbled, getting into his carriage, and then he drove away at full speed.

"May you break your neck!" we spoke in his wake. But that, too, was in vain: he didn't break his neck, the dog!

Suddenly our master also appeared. He stood in the open door, reeling from side to side.

"Hee-hee-hee," he laughed drunkenly, "gentlemen of the village, citizens, burghers, plenipotentiaries, what's the news? How's the case going? That's nothing, nothing! But just you wait, now I'll teach you what's what! Now you'll dance to my fife! I'll teach you who I am, so that you will never forget!"

And he kept his word! He has got us all in a vice, so that we can hardly breathe! The village didn't give up at once, it's true. We appealed, but our appeal was turned down. Then we decided to defend our rights with force, but by that we only made it worse for ourselves. The women, children, men and the old folks all surged out of the village so as not to let the master take the pastures. The master brought the army in. We fell to the earth in front of the soldiers, crying: "Stamp over us, shoot us down, but we won't get off this land, it's ours!" But the soldiers neither trod over us, nor did they shoot us down, they only separated into two platoons and rode their horses over the grain, over the fences

and into the village. We were forced to return. The soldiers remained in the village two months, they butchered and ate the best of our cattle, they completely beggared us, and when they were leaving, the master could be at ease: the community was broken and completely ruined, and was forced to deliver itself into his hands.

That's our fate. God knows whether it will ever be better, whether we'll be permitted to breathe more freely at least when we're dying. Meanwhile, the master is striving with all his might to draw the chains on us more securely yet. He has established five public-houses in the village, there is no school, he has selected the sort of priest that's hand in glove with him, and there's no one to advise us, we live like oxen in the yoke, and we don't even hold out the hope of a better fate to our children any more. . .

# Budget of the Beasts

БЮДЖЕТ ЗВІРІВ

### THE BUDGET OF THE BEASTS

Ivan Franko made use of a wide number of genres to carry his message to the people. Both to evade censorship and to bring the lesson to the common people in the most digestible form, he often applied the fairy tale style in his political writings. In this story the essence of the constitutional monarchy and of the state in Austro-Hungary is shown in its true light . . . in terms of the animal kingdom.

ONCE UPON A TIME, not on the other side of the Beskid mountains, but right here in our country, there lived a great and mighty emperor, who was named Lion, his surname being He-whose-belly-is-full-wants-no-meat. He was a good and just monarch; no one ever complained of him, and if anyone wanted to complain, it usually happened that before he knew what was up, he was already among the late departed, resting between the emperor's fangs. Lion ruled over all the beasts and all the birds, and they all obeyed him.

But you must know that from ancient times there was a Constitution in this animal kingdom, which declared that none should enjoy unlimited power and that each could devour only those whom he could catch, kill and skin. All had equal rights before the emperor; he was the strongest of them all and he had the right to catch, kill and skin any one of them. In his service he had subordinate governors, such as the Bear and the Wolf, and each of them had the same power over those who were of lower rank.

Whether the animals lived long under this Constitution, or whether they didn't, I cannot tell you. Enough to say that there came a time when they tired of it, and it became more bitter to their taste than horseradish, and they said to Emperor Lion:

“Exalted monarch, repeal that dog's Constitution! If we

are to have equality, then let it be true equality. You are our emperor and we all want to live under your sceptre. There is but one of you, and you may devour whomever you wish, skin whomever you wish, let your will be done. But if each of your governors claims the same right, and declares that he's 'the lord in his manor, equal to the king,' then we weaker ones—the Sheep, the Chickens and the Rabbits—simply won't be able to breathe any longer. It's coming so that the only choice we have is either to die or be killed!"

Emperor Lion listened to this address, and since his own belly was full and he was in good humour, he said:

"My loyal subjects, how right you are! I can see for myself that you can neither run nor hide if a Wolf or Black Kite takes a notion to do you harm. It shall be as you wish, my children. I will repeal the present Constitution, which annoys you so much, and I will proclaim a new Constitution, which will provide equality for all under the law—and I shall be the only law. Only I, my children, will have any right to you, and all the others must stay peaceful and tame, and let divine serenity reign over the whole country. Let no one dare to attack, murder or injure another, and if anyone should have the effrontery to commit such a crime, just rush your complaint to me, and I will punish the criminal with all the severity provided by the law."

All the animals were overjoyed to hear their emperor's kind words, and they dispersed and went to their homes. And no sooner said than done, the emperor actually ordered it broadcast far and wide over the entire country that no one might henceforth murder, tear to pieces and eat another, and that heavenly peace must reign over all the realm.

Oh, but there was a great fuss made when the Bears and the Wolves and all other beasts of prey learned about that new Constitution! You should have seen the panic that took place among them. The Lord preserve us! They raised such a roaring and a bellowing in all the woods and lairs

and caves! . . . And then they took counsel together and lit out lickety-split to see the emperor. They surrounded his capital like a black cloud and raised such a din that Lion couldn't make out what day it was, or if his head was on right, for the noise. The worst was the wailing of the female Wolves: "Oh, what will we give our kiddies to eat now? What will we feed our poor Wolf cubs? Must they eat grass? Must they chew bark from the trees? If we had expected evil times to come upon us, we would at least have put in some sauerkraut! But even so, what good is sauerkraut without pork fat! Ow-ow-ow, wo-o-o-oe is o-o-urs, o-o-o-oh wo-o-o-oe!"

Emperor Lion listened and listened to all this yelling and wailing, till at last he became angry, and he snapped his teeth, and he switched his tail, and he uttered such a roar in his powerful voice that all the beasts practically fell to the earth from fright. It became so quiet you could hear poppy seeds falling to the ground. And Lion said to them:

"Silence, you wretched rebels! Whoever makes another sound won't live another minute. What are you thinking? Who do you take me for? Am I not the ruler of all the animals? Am I only the protector of the Sheep, the friend of the Goats and the father of the Chickens? Are not all of you, the Bears, the Wolves, the Tigers, the Eagles and the Hawks as good or even better subjects and children to me as those others? Do you think that I would decree a Constitution which condemns you to starvation while allowing those ragamuffins to multiply without hindrance? Whoever thinks that is a fool!"

On hearing the emperor's words, the beasts and birds of prey began to breathe more easily. They regained their spirits, even though they didn't know as yet how the emperor intended to manipulate the Constitution in such a way that the Wolves should be fed and the Sheep stay whole. Lion continued his speech:

"Listen to my decree! The first paragraph of the new Constitution declares: 'All animals are equal before the

law, and the emperor is the law.' Therefore, today I decree that henceforth all governorships are abolished and all of you must come to live at my side and form my court, my bodyguard and my army. The other animals must provide food for me and my court. We will make up a budget, how much food is needed daily for all of you and your families, we shall present that budget for adoption by the House of Animals, where it will be adopted, and then you will all live as though you were inside the Heavenly Gates. You will see that it's much better to live under the new Constitution than without it. Previously you presumably had the right to seize and eat anyone you were able to overpower, but still you were compelled to run, to ambush, to catch, sometimes to battle and to suffer, often you went weak from hunger. . . . Now all that is finished. We will allocate the budget among the various communities, and they will themselves be obliged to bring your provisions to you, and you will only need to receive them and consume them. Now do you understand what the new Constitution means?"

The beasts and birds of prey almost jumped out of their skins for joy when they heard that sage explanation of the new Constitution. "Truly," each of them considered, "when the House of Animals adopts our budget, then everyone will say, 'We ourselves decided it, we ourselves want it, so let us carry out its provisions voluntarily.' And that's why the emperor is the emperor—to see to it that the House of Animals adopts every measure which he needs and wishes to be adopted."

And they all began to leap as high as they could with joy, to howl, to roar and to squeal, and to shout in all their voices: "Glory, glory, glory to our wise emperor!" And then, grasping one another by their front paws, they set to dancing their national dance before the throne of the emperor, while a choir of the finest singers sang the famous anthem in twenty-four voices:

"Lo-o-o-ong li-i-i-ifel!"

Needless to say, everything happened as Lion had fore-

told. The Bears, Wolves, Wild Boars, Kites, Eagles and all other preying animals very carefully figured out the amount of food which they, their families and their future families would need during the year. The emperor ordered his cabinet ministers to compile all those reckonings into a budget, and then he called the House of Animals into session and said:

“Well, my children, you have, thank God, your new Constitution. Does it meet with your approval?”

“It does, Your Royal Highness!” all the animals shouted.

“That’s fine, my children! It makes me very happy! Now pay attention to what I will tell you. You must protect the Constitution like the apple of your eye and in case of necessity sacrifice everything, literally everything, all your possessions and even your lives, to safeguard it!”

“We are prepared at any moment to make the supreme sacrifice!” the Asses, Oxen, Rams and other animals shouted with patriotic fervour.

“Your patriotism makes me very happy,” said Lion. “Believe me, I know its true worth. The Constitution, which I have bestowed on you, and which will throughout the ages glorify my reign, is as dear to me as it is to you. In order to protect it, to guard it as the most sacred thing on earth, to defend it from all external and internal enemies, not only am I myself prepared to labour day and night, sparing neither sweat nor blood, but more than that, I have set up a permanent guard, under whose protection every one of you, even the weakest, can sleep in peace.”

“God grant you many years of life, our wise and merciful emperor!” shouted all the animals, although this time not quite so joyfully as they had done before. And the emperor continued:

“Here are the accounts. You must voluntarily contribute that which is written here for my upkeep and that of my guard. In return I will guarantee that heavenly peace will reign in all the land forevermore.”

Pages distributed the printed figures among all the depu-

ties of the animals. The deputies glanced at the figures and icy shivers ran up their backs. But what could they do now? At least, folks would now have it down in black and white, how much, when and to whom each person must contribute, and they'll know that more won't be demanded of them.

"Secretary," ordered Lion, "read the budget aloud, then maybe someone will want to take the floor in debate on this question!"

Then one very old Ass rose and said:

"I move that the secretary be relieved of the necessity of reading it. We have all read the budget, and we realized at once that we couldn't manage without a budget. We all have faith in our emperor and are ready to do anything for his sake. Therefore, I move that this House adopts this budget at once and without debate. Everybody in favour, please stand."

All rose. The budget was adopted. From that time on true heavenly peace reigned in the animal kingdom.

Les's Widow's Household

ЛЕСИШИНА ЧЕЛЯДЬ

### LES'S WIDOW'S HOUSEHOLD

While large sections of the Ukrainian peasantry were forced off the land and pauperized, some few managed to grow rich and powerful in the villages through exploiting their families and the hired help, and by "squeezing every penny." The birth of such "kurkul" farmers and their practices and outlook is the theme of this story of Les's widow and her household. Here, too, Franko with great sympathy and penetration depicts the oppression of women in such conditions, the treatment of the daughter-in-law as a virtual slave, and forcing girls into loveless marriage.

IT WAS EARLY on a lovely summer morning. The big field of rye barely swayed in the cool, light breeze. The rye was like gold. The stalks bent under the weight of the grains and of the pearly drops of dew that hung from each one of them. The stems stood tall and straight, yellow and full, amid the green of the various weeds that spread along the ground. Here and there, amid this golden, rustling and scented sea could be seen the charming blue eye of a cornflower, a cockle bloom, or the blushing maiden face of a field poppy.

The sun rose. Grasshoppers began to chirp up and down the scale, large field flies began to buzz, colourful butterflies to flutter over the sea of grain. Nature woke to life. The breeze became stronger, blowing warm air from the direction of the wood, and it began to shake the silver dew off the grasses and flowers.

A clamour arose in the village as it became vibrant with life.

The commons became dotted with cattle which were being driven to pasture. Sleepy and unwashed, the cowherds walked behind the cows. Just a few of them, those who had already managed to have breakfast, were singing merrily, shouting and snapping their whips as they drove their charges.

Smoke rose from the houses. The housewives lighted

their stoves early in order to cook lunch; the younger women were sent to the fields right off.

It was only at old Les's widow's house that there was no smoke rising from the roof. Although there were three of them there, the old woman, her daughter Horpina, and her young daughter-in-law Anna, they never built their fire early in the morning, but always in the evening. They cooked and baked whatever they needed in the evening, and so didn't have any housework all day long. Zealous farm women, to put it mildly!

Les's widow's farm was not bad at all. The house was old, but still good; the farm buildings were new, roomy and neat, and the cattle was fine, each cow as sleek as a snail. The apiary, too, didn't go to pot after the death of the late Les. Les's widow took an old beggar man, Zaruba, into her home, patched him up and got him back in shape a little, and the oldster took care of the beehives in the summer and put his hands to every smallest thing that wanted doing around the house.

Les's widow really was a very thrifty and zealous woman. She also was very sharp and tough. If she took a notion, it made no difference if you crawled on your belly, she'd have her way. Although her hair was already turning grey, her face was red and healthy like a beet. She didn't have a smooth or oily tongue. To the contrary, she always spoke by fits and starts and as though she was angry. No one had ever heard a joke or any glad and sincere word from her lips. She knew how to needle everyone, no matter whom, with her sharp tongue. They say, for a fact, that she didn't become like that from good times. The late Les, they'll tell you, used to beat her severely in her younger years; he would nail her braid to the bench and then beat her . . . She would often resort to drink because of her woes in those days, and the habit still remained, although drunkenness never led her to spend money and throw away her hard-earned property. When she drank, she drank by herself. No one in her house or in the village ever smelled

whiskey on her breath. Old Les's widow was very hard and miserly.

Her son Hnat couldn't get married for a long time. No girl in the village wanted to wed him. Maybe it was because he was so ill-natured and a bully, or maybe because he was so ugly. His hair was red, his eyes were small and sly like some Tatars have, and he himself was huge in size, with a head like a big pot, and pouting lips like two cushions. But that's not our affair — let the Mother of God pass judgment on him! — it's just that no girl wanted to be married to him. And also, nobody rightly knows why, people spun yarns about his fingers being sticky, suggesting that they often latched on to things that didn't belong to him. I don't know how it is elsewhere, but in our village there's no worse shame than getting a reputation for having a tendency to steal. He isn't actually a thief, so to say, there's no criminal charge against him, but he has a tendency that way . . . As the saying goes, "he has don't-touch in his hands." Whether it's a case of sneaking a few sheaves from a neighbor's field in the night, or swiping some silly little thing from someone else's empty yard in the day, no difference whether he was seen or not, if a man gets such a reputation he can never wash himself clean of it. That's how it was with Les's widow's son Hnat, and that's why he couldn't get married for a long time. No girl would have him, that's all.

But finally one was found — Timish's Anna. She married Hnat to her sorrow. A poor orphan, without a father or mother, all the dowry she brought to Les's widow's house was her black eyebrows, her brown eyes, two hands to work with, and a patient, obedient and submissive heart. Oh, but she suffered in her life with Hnat! Before a year was past, her beauty began to disappear, the brightness of her eyes faded, her lovely head began to bow to the ground! No wonder — it was a case of ceaseless bickering, quarreling, and fighting. Whom wouldn't such a life bow to the earth and rob of gaiety? . . .

So there you have Les's widow's household. Oh yes, there was also the hired boy, the cowherd Vasil. He was nicknamed

Hooter, because always, just as soon as he would drive the cattle into the woods, he would start singing and he kept it up all day. In the one minute he would sing a sprightly Kolomeika, a drawn-out Duma, a wedding song, and a church hymn. He wasn't literate, so he did it all from memory, but he couldn't finish even one. The tunes and the lyrics got mixed up in his head into a state of wild chaos, and flapped about like rags in a windstorm. They didn't entertain, they only deafened him. When he sang, he was not aware of the world about him, not even of himself. The cattle wandered where they willed. But he didn't like to listen when someone else was singing. To put it briefly, he was touched. God knows how he got that way. Maybe it was also from poverty and beatings. For oh, he had suffered all sorts of evil in his life since his parents died of the cholera. It is said that they were well-off and babied their wee Vasilchik no end. Death took them away suddenly one day, and Vasilchik found himself in strange hands — and strange hands, as every one knows, don't pat you on the head! They beat him because he was spoiled, stubborn and lazy. They drove those faults out of him all right, but they also stupefied his young brain, and pounded the last spark of childish freedom and liveliness out of him. The property melted away in strange hands like snow in the water, and Vasil was given to old Les's widow as chore boy. Here, of course, he got tougher schooling yet. Here he suffered not so much from beatings as from hunger and incessant nagging, which was Les's widow's way of corroding people's souls, as rust corrodes iron. But Vasil did not actually hear her. So long as he was in the house, among people, he kept silent and went about in a fog, but just as soon as he was off by himself, in the woods or pasture, he would sing away, or holler rather, without a thought, and people laughed at him and he himself, probably, got relief from it, or at least forgetfulness, intoxication and insensibility.

## II

LES'S WIDOW, as we have said, was zealous, and she led the way as she walked along with her daughter and daughter-in-law to the field to reap the rye.

"Let's see if our Hooter will let the cows go into the green again today, or whether he'll remember yesterday's bruises," Les's widow said, half jokingly, as she walked in front, the new sickle shining under her arm.

"Why shouldn't he let them go? When he starts hooting, he forgets about the whole world, let alone the cows!" Horpina answered. Her comely young face shone to the rising sun with healthy red cheeks. She was the happiest of all in that household. Her mother loved her, although to tell the truth, often she too had to taste the bitter from her mother or her brother.

"That's how it goes. They've driven the poor boy dizzy, like a cat with sunstroke, and now they're finishing him off!" Anna whispered to herself. It was in the poor orphan's heart that pity was most quickly found for another such unfortunate orphan as she was.

"Ha, like sticks up for like!" Les's widow angrily snapped at her. She had caught her daughter-in-law's quiet words.

"An orphan, but her mouth's as big as a gate!" she shouted further. "Never fear, my kitten, you deserve to be hung along with him from one branch! Two of them come together and right away one starts being sorry for the other. Eh, may the Mother of God deny you a single day of grace for the way you're wasting my substance and eating my bread for nothing, and acting up yet."

"Oh, mother, are you starting up again?" Horpina said snappishly. "You should be ashamed to talk like that. Why, you'd even move a stone with your tongue, so it wouldn't lie idle and take up space for nothing, let alone living human beings. Don't we work, that you say we eat bread for nothing?"

"Oy, ho-ow yo-ou wo-ork!" Les's widow jibed, drawing out the words. "You work like a person with clay hands and

a cabbage head works. If I didn't holler at you and do your thinking for you, your work would amount to the same as last year's snow."

Les's widow fell silent. She was gasping for breath. Nobody spoke any more.

They arrived at their destination. Anna selected a place in the boundary furrow, where she put the lunch. Les's widow's little field was only six strips wide. Three strips could be easily ploughed in a day.

Les's widow was already arranging things.

"You, useless," she spoke rapidly to her daughter-in-law, "you stand there!" (She pointed to the widest stretch.) "You (to her daughter) here, and I'll take the edge strip!"

They took up their positions.

"Help us, Lord!" said Les's widow, and first she cut a handful of ripe, full-eared grain, made the first straw-band, tied a small sheaf, and put it to the side. This was the "first-born" and it was supposed to have an influence on the harvest.

"Now, to work!" she spoke again. And the three women's heads bowed to the earth, their cheeks flushing. The sickles glistened in their hands, and the hard rye stems crackled as the shining, toothed steel cut through them. Handful after handful, it fell to the ground. The reapers lifted each cropped handful gracefully over their heads and placed it on the stubble. Once in a while one or another of them would straighten up, pull out a handful of rye, shake off the grass weeds, twist it into a straw band, and lay it on the fresh, scented stubble. Crickets, beetles and insects of all kinds ran before the sickles. Sometimes a frightened grey field-mouse streaked out of its nest, ran past the women's feet and disappeared again into some hole.

It is good to reap early in the morning, with the dew. Crump-crump, crump-crump . . . That's all that could be heard, that and the rustle of rye being made into sheaves.

But little by little the fresh field air, the big loneliness and quiet of the field, and the monotony of the labour impelled the spirit to express itself. It wasn't easy to get a

conversation going, as old Les's widow always managed to sharply cut it off. The only thing left was to sing.

And little by little, a lovely silvery voice was distinguished from among the general silence and the crackle of the stems. At first it was very low, as though bashful. That was Horpina's voice. The old woman kept on reaping and paid no attention to it. Horpina became bolder, her voice became stronger, and a sad song poured out from her heart:

*A willow's branches bend to where the wind is blowing;  
A maiden eyes the one who sets her heart a-glowing.*

"Hey, you, slut!" Les's widow shouted at her daughter-in-law. "Why are you lagging behind? Arthritis in your arms, or what?"

Anna, who wasn't strong anyway, could not keep up with the others since she had the widest strip. She was left nearly a sheaf and a half behind.

"Why are you picking on me today, mother, like a hornet?" she replied, gathering up courage somehow, but still not daring to lift her head. "Can't you see that I can't reap any faster because the strip is wide? Your edge strip is easy. It's a cinch for you."

This enraged Les's widow.

"Oho, just look at her! How bold and brassy she's become. She lifts her snout against me yet! Oh, you hussy! If only evening would come fast, when Hnat comes home from the hay-field, you won't be so smart-alecky then!"

Anna wanted to talk back again, but Horpina whispered to her:

"Cut it out, sis! Mother always has to nag. Let's reap side by side."

Anna kept silent. Horpina began to cut a bit on her strip, until she had taken over nearly half of it. She was a good soul, not like her mother at all, though she sometimes spoke her way, simply because she knew her mother's knotty character. Again all was quiet, only the stems crackled, and every once in a while a sickle rang against a stone.

Later on Horpina started another song. Anna also felt grief and sorrow welling up within her and she tried to pour them out in a song. Timidly, but evenly she warbled:

*Oh the sun went down like a ball of flame,  
And now my window's dark'ning;  
Come outside, my love, come to me again,  
And we will talk, my darling!*

*I would go outside, I would go outside,  
But I'm afraid, my darling,  
For him at my side, whom I can't abide  
I might awake, my darling!*

Les's widow listened to the song with set teeth. Several times she glanced sternly at her daughter-in-law with a frown. Anna didn't see this and continued to reap and to sing. Even a large tear rolled down from her sorrowing eye and fell on the sickle. That showed that not only her lips, but her heart was singing this song as well.

"See, what she has on her mind! A frowsy farmwife yet! See what songs she trills!" Les's widow interrupted angrily.

"Oh, leave Anna alone, mother!" Horpina told her with spirit. "What's got into you? You won't let us talk, or cry, or laugh, and now you're even forbidding us to sing! What the dickens will it be next?"

"Hoho, so you're going to start chattering, you pluck-tailed magpie!" her mother cried. "You'd do better to reap and keep quiet! Never fear, I know what's inside of you! If you don't shut up, I'll teach you, too, the price of a yard of borshch!"

Again the work went on wearily and drearily. The old woman hollered, now at the daughter, now at the daughter-in-law, from time to time, like an overseer during the days of serfdom. The sun climbed higher and higher. They now spread the rye on the wide swaths, without sheaving it. Our three women ate their lunch, and without stopping to rest, went back to work. The sun was broiling, and sweat poured from their faces. The crickets chirped loudly and

shrilly. It seemed as though their sound came from deep under the earth and it grated on the ears like sharp sand. Apart from the crickets, all was silent, everything hid away from the burning sun's rays in the shade. Only humans, the lords of creation, labour when nature rests.

### III

"LESIKHO! LESIKHO!" the voice of some haymaker was heard from the direction of the wood.

Les's widow straightened up, put her hand to her forehead and stared into the distance.

"Do you see, three of your cows are in the oats?" the voice kept crying.

From the woods came snatches of Vasil's hooting and shrill singing:

*Over there, in a hat,  
On a hill the devil sat,  
But we didn't know him . . .  
He-ey (this "hey" was endlessly drawn out)  
Mother dear, mother sweet,  
Let me go out on the street . . .  
Loo-o-ord, hear my prayer! . . .*

"Oh, you devil's seed! So you've done it again! May you holler your liver right out! Hey, Vasil! Hey, Vasil! May the devil's mother nest in your livers! Can't you see that the cows are causing damage, huh? May your blinkers pop out of your head!"

"Lord, have me-er-ey!" came the echo from the wood. That "mercy" was very long drawn out and finally got lost somewhere in the far, dark wood.

"Hooter, hey, Hooter!" the hay-maker shouted again from near the wood. "Get busy and drive the cows out of the oats! Get going, hey!"

"Oh ha, ha, oh gee, gee, driving oxen in the field!" bawled Hooter from the wood.

The hay-maker evidently lost patience, for he put his

scythe over his shoulder and ran to chase the cows from the oatfield himself. He drove them back into the wood and disappeared after them in the green depths. And soon there came the sound of Vasil bawling and screaming.

"That's how, that's how, that's how!" Les's widow muttered, bending again to reap. "Let him take his hide right off, I won't say a thing to him! He should be watching the cattle, instead of hooting!"

Evening was nearing. The sun pompously rolled over the blue mountains. A fog began to settle on the fields and to roll along in ever wider wisps. The landrails cried out from under it, like children from under a quilt. Quail pit-pitted in the rye. A warm wind blew in from the bogs and brought the smell of raw sweet-flag and tatar-weed. Somehow the heart became light and tender.

Our reapers finished their rows, stood up, straightened out their backs and caught their breath.

"It'll be a fine day tomorrow," Le's widow spoke, somewhat more kindly than was usual. "Thank God, we got through today. Tomorrow we'll have to harvest the barley at Bazarishche."

"It'll be a fine night tonight," whispered Horpina, colouring slightly and sighing.

Anna smiled at her, but rather sadly, as though through tears. She alone knew the secret of Horpina's maiden heart, about her love for handsome, blackbrowed young Mitro Hromik.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Anna, pluck some weeds for the cows at milking! You, girl, run and water the calves! Quickly, now!"

Anna immediately set to the chore without a word, more readily than usually. What a magic power there is in just one kindly word! Horpina, half running and singing, headed for home, while old Les's widow, putting her sickle on her head, the blade to the kerchief, and heaving the "first-born" sheaf on to her shoulder, followed pompously. The last to strike out for home was Anna, toting on her shoulders a huge blanket, filled with fresh, scented and florescent

weeds. The cows were already waiting for her, and glimpsing their customary supper, they began to low happily and crowded about the door to the entrance-hall, each waiting for her turn to enter, munch on the tasty weeds and deliver her supply of milk, stored up during the entire day, into the clean bucket.

#### IV

DARKNESS HAD long since fallen. In Les's widow's house a fire was made in the stove and it burned with a bright red flame. Anna and Horpina potted about, cooking whatever was needed for tomorrow. The ancient Zaruba sat on the fore part of the oven, loudly saying his prayers, while Vasil, having taken a calling down from old Les's widow and receiving a couple of heavy blows between the shoulders, climbed up on the brick stove and fell asleep without waiting for supper.

The sound of heavy male steps and the clang of a scythe were heard from outside the windows, and then Hnat came into the house, threw his old straw hat on the bench and sat down at the corner of the table.

"Hey, you Hooter! Are the oxen tied?"

"They're tied; they're tied," answered Anna, who was washing the dishes and busying herself with preparing supper.

"And you, housewife, where are your sickles?"

"Where should they be? They're in the hallway, on the ledge over the door. Where should I have put them?"

"Aha! If I hadn't noticed in time, I would have cut my foot for good! Right by the threshold!"

"The cats must have . . ."

"Oh, you wretch! You're supposed to guard my property like you would the eyes in your head! You have nothing of your own to scatter about! You didn't bring me any dowry!"

Anna fell silent. These words wounded her deeply. "Why did you take me, then? You could see that I was poor!"

Such thoughts crowded on her brain, but she lacked the courage to fling them into Hnat's teeth.

"Well, it's time to sleep!" Les's widow commanded. "You, useless, put out the fire in the stove, and clean out the ashes, hear me? The pots go into the oven, so the meal will get cooked proper for tomorrow. Horpina, there's no water! Quick, out you go to fetch some water!"

Anna began to tidy up, and Horpina ran out to the hallway. There was heard the rattle of the buckets and the yoke for carrying water, the door creaked, and from the yard came a snatch of happy song.

*If I was such a beauty as that star above,  
Day and night I'd keep a-shining for the one I love!*

"Hear what kind of crickets are chirping in her head!" Hnat said angrily, as he undressed. "Mother, don't send her at night for water!"

"Why not?"

"Don't you know? That long-nosed Hromik from across the road is making up to her . . ."

"What?" shrieked Les's widow. "That snotnose dares to creep up to my daughter? Why, I'll pull out every hair on his cabbage head! I'll order his mother to keep him in, if she doesn't want him to land in trouble!"

Hnat had already got into bed. Les's widow couldn't sleep for a long time, and stalked about the house.

"Ho, just let me get my hands on him! He'll know what's what! Such a scrub pig! Why, I'll grab him by one leg, and put my foot on the other, and tear him limb from limb."

"Ah, why are you like that, mother?" Anna tried to calm her down. Up till now she had remained silent all through the conversation, finishing up the housework. "What's come over you? Why do you listen to that Hnat's yarns? Let him tell you if he ever saw Hromik making up to Horpina with his own eyes?"

"Hoho, what a lawyer she has turned out to be!" Hnat cried from the bed. "When are you going to bed, my wage-less worker! . . ."

Les's widow undressed and lay down on the place beside the stove where Anna had laid a featherbed and two pillows for her. Old man Zaruba was already snoring loudly on the stove, and from time to time Vasil hooted.

"Grandpa, turn over on the other side! Don't snore like that or you'll bring the stove down!" shouted Les's widow, poking him in the ribs.

"God reward us! Working hands, and walking feet, and heedful heads," Zaruba began his customary prayer in his sleep, but soon he turned over and was silent. Soon Les's widow fell asleep.

The house became quiet. The moon peeked, shy and pale, through the dull panes. Anna did not yet lie down to sleep. She put her forehead to the window, planted her elbows on the sill, and for a long time stood like that, lost in thought. What was she thinking of? God knows. Maybe her youthful years, the unhappy years of an orphan, passed before her eyes. Maybe her heart remembered a first, happy, ill-fated love, for two tears rose in her eyes, and a sad song burst barely audibly from her lips:

*The willows rustled by the glade,  
The osiers also did;  
I love you truly, my sweet maid,  
And yet we'll not be wed.  
My parents will not let me take  
My sweetheart for a wife . . .  
Yet 'tis for her that my heart aches,  
Without her there's no life!*

"Wife, you good-for-nothing beggar! Have you chosen this time to catch mice, or what? Why don't you go to bed?" Hnat asked.

Anna collected herself, wiped away her tears and knelt down to pray.

She prayed long, her words fervent, simple and sincere.

From outside came the neighing of horses that were being driven by the grooms to pasture, the mournful sound of the

flute, and the creak of the landrail. A dog barked and then was silent. A late stork cried out on a neighbor's house. And on the commons, Horpina and her lover were saying goodnight.

"Horpina, honey, wait a bit! We haven't talked near enough."

"No, Mitrik, there's no time, mother will raise a row. You know what she is! Goodnight! And tomorrow . . ."

She didn't finish, only picked up the buckets with water and ran to the house.

"Yeah, tomorrow," Mitro whispered in her wake. "Who knows what tomorrow will be like."

He looked long at Les's widow's house, then became lost in a reverie.

"Maybe I love her in vain? Will old Lesikha let me marry her?" he thought. His heart contracted with pain as he recalled his poverty.

"I've got to work, to earn as much as I possibly can, but whether anything will come of it? . . . That's our buck-wheat lot . . ."

He sighed heavily, pulled a flute from his shirt-front and played a tune, but it was such a fine and mournful tune as though all his hopes for quiet happiness were being drowned in that sound.

"Bitter is my lot!" Mitro whispered and he turned towards his poor shanty, ringed with willow trees, where his old mother dwelt. Soon from amid the thick, green willows, could be heard a manly voice singing:

*Oh, the rooster still is mum  
Yet folks say that day has come!  
Pretty lass, come out to me,  
I would like to speak with thee!*

The Pencil

ОЛІВЕЦЬ

### THE PENCIL

This is one of Ivan Franko's autobiographical stories, which describes the condition of poverty in the villages where a pencil was a great treasure—and the brutality of what educational system there existed in Galicia in Franko's youth (and such things persisted even up to recent times).

I BEG YOU in no way to think that I'm telling a fictional tale or that the title of this story is a metaphor of some sort. No, the business is really about a pencil, and not a whole one at that, but a stub . . . oh, let us say, three inches long. But then, if anyone would say that it was three and a half inches long, I wouldn't sue them, either. What I know well, however, is that it didn't reach four inches. On that, as the jurists say, I could "take my oath," or as our Yasenitsi folk say, "cross my heart and hope to die." The hero of this story was three and a half inches long, no longer. Many years have passed since we last saw each other, that is, since I saw it, for how could it see me with its sharpened point? Anyway, it lay a whole day and a half in my schoolbag, underneath the books, verily in pitch darkness! Not to tell a lie, that was not less than sixteen years ago—enough time to forget even the closest friend. But I never forgot it, that stub of a pencil, three and a half inches long, with its dark red wood, cut six-sided and painted yellow, with the name "Mittel" stamped on the blunt end in silver; the other end was sharpened, not too sharp, but also not too dull — just as much as a village schoolboy needed.

That's how it lay on the snow one wintry morning in the Yasenitsi schoolyard right by the path made by the early pupils. It was a clear, lovely morning. The frost was

biting like mad; wee shreds of snow floated in the air, completely transparent, visible only in diamond-like flashes when the sun's rays broke on them. The pencil did not sink in the icy, sparkling snow, but lay entirely on top. Its yellow paint glistened to the sun and the silver letters of "Mittel" could be seen from afar. Some schoolboy, running to school, must have lost it. And so it lay there, stretching its black, sharpened point toward the school wall, as though it was trying to tell every passer-by that was where it belonged; as though it was begging with its silver eyes to be picked up from its bed, which was fine, but very cold, and carried there, into the school, from which the din made by the boys as they were waiting for the teacher to come, could be heard all over the village.

Now, say yourself, on your honour, what would you have done if you had happened to come upon such a "Mittel" in such a position, not entierly suited to its "rank." I think that 90 percent of you, not suspecting that this was the hero, let alone of a story, but even of a news item or a tiny advertisement, would have picked it up and simply put it in your pocket? The other 10 percent would doubtlessly not even have bent down for it.

I freely admit that I belonged to the 90 percent, that is, suspecting no evil in the pencil, I bent down for it and, since I had no pockets on me, I placed it in my leather schoolbag, where I kept my books. But what was not very ordinary was the fact that I was overjoyed at my find. I was a poor village lad and in all my life till that time I had never had a pencil, but was compelled to write with that confounded goose quill which blotted so terribly, splat-tering and sputtering under the pressure of my hand. And what a fine pencil! It's true that I had seen it only for a fleeting moment when it was lying on the snow, for then I had picked it up in my hand and quickly shoved it into the bag, as though fearing that the sun, which was shining so brightly, would steal it from my fingers. Another curious thing about all this was that the thought never even en-



tered my head that some other schoolboy might have lost it — hear me, not even a thought. No, no, no! Which schoolboy among us loses pencils! It must have been that some goodness knows what unknown gentleman had visited the teacher and doubtlessly he had lost this pencil. Or, maybe, it was the dealer to whom teacher sold a cow last year; it could be that the pencil lay there from last year yet and no one noticed the poor thing. Or maybe it fell together with the snow from the sky in the night? Didn't Granny say that quite often frogs fall from the sky, so why not pencils? That's how I figured as I crossed the yard to the school. So what, isn't a six-year-old boy permitted to think that way? Well, then! I took a great liking to that pencil. I kept my hand inside the bag and the pencil was in my hand, I turned it this way and that, trying to guess its thickness, and to recall its shape. In brief, my imagination constantly fluttered and circled around that pencil like a butterfly does around a flower. It adamantly chased away any idea that the pencil might belong to another school-

boy and that I, therefore, would have to give it back to its owner.

The classroom was full of pupils already. Some were seated at their desks, mumbling about their homework and every second darting a frightened glance at the door, wondering whether the teacher was coming. Others, who were bolder, walked about the classroom, fought, pushed each other between the desks, drew all kinds of monstrosities on the blackboard and then quickly rubbed them off with the wet cloth that served as a sponge. Nobody asked about the pencil. This pleased me very much, and I quickly, as though stealthily, made my way to the second row and sat down at my usual place. Pulling out the book needed for the next class, I heard the scratch of the pencil against the leather in my bag and began to tremble all over — I don't know whether from joy or from some unknown alarm.

Now the teacher came and school started. All's well! Here the period was over, the teacher had gone, the noise and clamour of recess had begun as always, and still no one spoke about the pencil. I sat, looked about me and trembled like a thief over his loot, fearing that at any moment someone would come and demand the pencil from me.

But no-one asked for the pencil. The schoolboys walked about, studied, made mischief or picked fights as always.

Stepan Leskiv, my good friend, approached me.

"Oho, it's clear that you don't know your arithmetic lesson today; you sure will catch a hiding! And if teacher tells me to give you the beating, boy, you had better watch out!"

What a tease that Stepan was! He knew that I was weak in arithmetic, so he kept teasing me. But I knew for sure that he was only joking; besides, today I was not afraid of the teacher because I had learned my arithmetic lesson (to write out the numbers up to 100). I learned it extra good! Who do you think all day yesterday was writing

numerals with his fingers on the window panes covered thick with mist?

"Just don't you worry too much about my arithmetic," I replied to Stepan. "You had better watch that you don't get a hiding yourself!"

It's the strangest thing, honest, so strange! I had intended to answer Stepan also jokingly, with a smile, gently — but I replied somehow so angrily, so sharply, with such a rough voice, that it even made me feel bad! I could even feel how the blood suffused my entire face. Stepan stood over me for a moment, saying nothing more, and stared at me with puzzled eyes, and then he walked away, evidently saddened that he had hurt me with his joke. He liked me so much, that gentle, quiet, helpful, goodnatureed lad! Why had I answered him so sharply? Why had I saddened him? After all, he had spoken to me jokingly and I had no reason to get angry with him!

Such were the thoughts that raced through my head as Stepan went and silently sat at his desk. He was a small, tow-headed lad of eight. His father, a poor peasant, was a neighbor of my uncle's, at whose place I stayed, so that we two boys were constant companions. They say that Stepan's father had once been a wealthy man, but a big fire and other misfortunes had ruined his farm. He was a tall, strong man with a dour countenance, who bent more and more to the ground and spoke in a deep, gruff voice. Somehow, I was involuntarily afraid of him, and thought him a cruel man. Little Stepan, on the other hand, took after his mother, a quiet, gentle woman with a good-natureed face that was still pretty, and bright grey eyes. That's why many a time I would stand behind the hedge fence by the pasture, waiting for old Leskiv to leave the house so that I could run in if only for a moment to play with Stepan. Of course, we often quarreled, too, as children do, but never for long. I, who was quicker to quarrel and even to fight, was also the first to make up, while

Stepan, always even tempered, would smile so warmly, as though he wanted to say:

“See, I knew all along you couldn’t do without me!”

But now, why did I get angry at Stepan? But no, I knew full well that I wasn’t angry with him at all! To the contrary, his hurt, sad look brought on a pain that twisted my childish breast. Somehow I was ashamed, not knowing myself why it was so, and I forgot about the pencil. It wasn’t until these impressions cooled off and passed away, and I saw before me the bag, in which my senses felt the touch of the pencil as though from afar, that my imagination returned to that object and in a minute I had completely forgotten about Stepan and his sad look.

The teacher came in again, the study hour began and slowly came to an end — and still no-one had uttered a word about the pencil.

In the third period we were to have arithmetic. That lofty and terrible science was taught in this way, that the teacher called one pupil up to the blackboard, told him to write numbers on it, and all the other boys had to write those same numbers down in their scribblers. The teacher continually walked about the desks, peering here and there into the scribblers to see if all were writing properly.

Before the arithmetic period I heard some kind of racket, some frightened, broken questions and answers in the last row, where Stepan sat, but I could not figure out what this was about due to the general din. Just the same, something nudged me, some sort of disquiet took hold of me. I thought to myself: “I won’t take the pencil out now, I’ll write with the pen as usual, though I’m fed up with it.”

The teacher came in. Resting a moment at the table, he rose and called me to the blackboard. I went up, scared, shivering, because writing in general, be it letters or numbers, was a hard nut for me to crack; all symbols came out crooked, hooked and sprawling from under my hand, so that they usually looked like an old fence, in which each

post sticks out in a different direction and the cross pickets stick out each its own way, unable to achieve a juncture with the fenceposts. But what could I do? Once the teacher called me up, I had to go. I stood at the board and took the rag in my right hand and the chalk in my left.

"35!" cried the teacher and glanced at me. "Why, you blockhead, how are you holding the chalk? You're going to write southpaw, eh?"

I transposed the unfortunate instruments of learning in both my hands, then I lifted my right hand as high up as I could on the blackboard and barely managed to reach its middle. The task to write the number 35 on the blackboard was difficult, because one had to write "twisting" numerals. Yesterday, practicing writing numerals with my finger on window panes, I had long considered how to write that confounded three so it would come out roundish and with a little projection in the middle. I had nobody I could ask, so I figured it out, that I would write it starting from the middle of the projection, first drawing an arc upward, then another downward. That's how I learned to write it at home and that's how I essayed now with trembling hand to do it on the board. But now, worse luck, my hand was shaking, what little strength there was in it seemed to freeze up, so that no matter how I suffered to press the chalk to the blackboard, the confounded lines came out so thin and frail that they were hardly visible. With great travail I managed to write a three.

"Well, are you finished?" shouted the teacher and turned to me.

"Not . . . not yet," I answered and covered with cold sweat, I began to write 5, again according to my own method, of course, i.e., beginning with the bottom.

"What, what, what?" the teacher cried and ran up closer to me. "How are you writing, how?"

I was silent. My trembling hand finished the figure on the board. The five looked more like an S than a round-bellied coxcombed 5.

"Oh, you sow's belly!" (that was the usual epithet applied by the teacher to the schoolchildren.) "Don't you know how 5 is written?"

And without waiting for an answer to this question, the teacher grabbed up a flat ruler from the table with one hand, with the other took hold of my hand, from which the chalk flew out, and a loud smack resounded over the classroom. My palm turned red and seemed to swell, while under the skin it was as though ants were crawling. I had been able to withstand pain from my earliest years, so I didn't cry, only made a face.

"So you don't know how to write a 5? Didn't you see how I did it? Look how 5 is written — like this!" and the teacher snatched up the chalk and with a sweeping movement first wrote a huge 5 on the blackboard and then one like it (though, maybe, not so correct and clear) on my face.

"Keep on writing," he shouted at me. "48!"

I took the chalk and began to write. The teacher looked on for another minute. The four satisfied him and he went among the desks.

"Why aren't you writing?" he shouted threateningly at the boys, who were watching what was taking place at the board, half laughing and half afraid. At the teacher's roar all the heads bent down as grain bows its ripening, heavy ears before the wind.

"You, you marriage broker, how did you write 3?" the teacher asked one boy.

Instead of an answer, instead of an explanation, smack went the ruler on the palm of the hand.

"What's that over the 5?" he asked another.

"A blot from the quill."

Again a smack of ruler on palm.

"And you, godfather, why aren't you writing?" he asked a third.

"Because I . . . pl . . . please, teacher," Stepan Leskiv's voice came through his tears.

"What?" roared the teacher menacingly.

"I lost my pencil somewhere."

At that moment the chalk for some unknown reason fell from my hand. I repeat: for some unknown reason, for I was sure that the pencil which was peacefully reposing in my bag didn't belong to Stepan. By no means! But still, when I heard his words, I became so scared and my hand began to shake so, that the chalk slipped from my hand like a fish. I was fortunate that the figure I had been ordered to write was already written, for now I couldn't have written it.

"So," shouted the teacher, "you lost it? Just wait a bit I'll teach you!"

The Lord knows what it was that the teacher wanted to teach Stepan. We, the pupils, only knew that two days back the teacher had had a terrible quarrel with Stepan's father and, it appeared, was only waiting for an excuse to take revenge on the boy for the father; aside from that, we saw that today the teacher was a little drunk and knew there would be beatings.

"March to the middle!" he shouted to Stepan.

The poor boy evidently knew what was coming and he moved slowly; the teacher grabbed him by his long yellow hair and dragged him to the middle of the room.

"Stand here! And you," he turned to me, "have you written it?"

"Yes, I have."

"Go to your seat. And you go up to the board."

With these words the teacher poked Stepan. I began to breathe a little more easily, firstly, because I myself was now seated in a safe place, and secondly, because I thought that nothing would happen to Stepan because of the pencil, since teacher had sent him back to the blackboard — for I knew that Stepan could write. Only when I heard the angry voice in which the teacher dictated new numerals to Stepan, and saw how vicious he got when he saw that Stepan was writing them correctly, did I begin to be afraid for some reason. My heart was heavy as though something

kept whispering inside me that if something had happened to Stepan because of the pencil, I would also be to blame. I don't know why such strange thoughts should come into my head, but one thing was certain, I was shivering like an aspen leaf.

Stepan kept writing figures until the blackboard was all covered and the teacher kept constantly watching to catch him making a mistake, but he couldn't.

"Enough," he cried. "Now lie down!"

"But what for, please, teacher?" asked Stepan.

"What? What for? You are asking yet? Lie down at once!"

When I heard those words I felt as though something was choking me. The teacher went to the back to pick out a stick, while poor Stepan, pale and trembling, stood by the blackboard, wringing the rag in his hands.

"Why does teacher want to beat me?" Stepan asked again through tears as he saw the teacher approaching with a rod in his hand.

"Lie down!" he shouted and without further ado he grasped Stepan by the hair, turned him over on the chair and began to beat him with the stick with all his might. Stepan cried out from pain, but the cry only seemed to infuriate the drunken teacher.

"You'll know next time how to lose pencils!" he shouted in a hoarse, panting voice and the rod whistled as it fell on poor Stepan's body.

What was taking place inside of me during that long, terrible hard time? The first idea that flashed through my head was to stand up and say that it was all my fault, that I had Stepan's pencil, that I had found it, but hadn't returned it. But fear of the whistling rod rivetted me to my seat, and squeezed my throat as though with steel pincers. . . . Stepan's screams tore at my breast. I was all bathed in cold sweat; I clearly felt pain, the sharp pain from the rod. I felt it in all my body and so vividly that all my muscles involuntarily contracted and trembled, while in my throat rose sobs which could have been heard through-

out the room. But terror had stunned everybody to such a degree that notwithstanding the graveyard silence none of my classmates heard my sobs.

And the teacher continued to administer the beating! Poor Stepan had already become hoarse, his face turned blue from strain, his fingers convulsively dug into the teacher's knees, his feet kicked in the air, but the rod didn't stop whistling through the air and each swish, every whack on Stepan's coarse home-spun shirt shook and squeezed thirty childish hearts in that classroom and evoked new screams of pain and despair from Stepan's breast. I no longer remember and I don't want to recall what was taking place within me during that terrible time, what sensations flashed through my body, what pain penetrated my joints, what thoughts tumbled about in my head. But no, there were no thoughts at all! I sat cold and petrified, like a stone! Even now, after sixteen years, whenever I recall that moment, it seems to me that it stunned me for a long time as though from a blow with a rock on the forehead, and if I had had many such moments in my childhood, I would have become the same sort of dolt as those which we see by the hundreds in every primary school in our country, those unhappy, physically and spiritually stunted children, whose senses from the most tender years were dulled by terrible, disgusting scenes, and their heads from six years of age stupefied by such school discipline.

At last the whistling of the rod ceased. The teacher let go of Stepan and he fell to the floor, drained of strength, exhausted and breathless. The teacher, red as a beet, threw away the rod and sat down in the chair from which Stepan had just rolled off. For a minute he panted, not saying a word. The whole classroom was silent, still as the grave and sad. Only the groans of the poor lad, who was convulsively sobbing, could be heard.

"Aren't you getting up?" hissed the teacher, kicking him in the side with his foot.

After a moment Stepan with great difficulty lifted himself to his feet and stood, holding on to a desk.

"Get to your seat! And next time know what it means to lose pencils!"

Stepan went to his seat. Silence again descended on the classroom. The teacher had evidently sobered up a bit and perceived that he had done wrong to beat the boy so hard. He knew that it wasn't good to tangle with Leskiv. This thought irritated him more than ever and he sprang up and began to run about the room, panting heavily.

"Oh, you beggars, you bandits!" he yelled as he ran and it wasn't clear whether he meant us, the children, or the absent Yasinitsi citizens.

The teacher ran about the room some more, breathed heavily again and muttered under his nose, and then he turned to us and shouted:

"Go home!"

But even that usually magic phrase, which promised us reprieve from the burden of school learning if only for the day, now made no more impression on us than if it had been spoken to the deaf. Alarm and uncertainty had stunned all the schoolboys, and robbed them of their reflexes. A second, louder shout from the teacher was needed before all rose to prayer.

When the pupils moved from their desks and began to leave the room after the prayers, this was not accompanied by the usual noise and gadding about; all went slowly, glancing with apprehension at the teacher who stood by the table until all the boys had gone out. Everyone felt somehow depressed. Stepan went out sobbing, and when already at the door he glanced back at the teacher, the latter shook his fist at him. I went out practically at the end, barely dragging my feet. I was so terribly frightened and ashamed for some reason, that at that moment I would have been glad if I could have fallen through the earth. Maybe a murderer feels such a weight on his heart after he has committed a crime, I don't know. Especially, I wouldn't have looked Stepan in the face at that moment for all the

money in the world. I imagined his pain so vividly—no, I suffered it no less than he—and in addition that confounded inner voice constantly whispered to me that he was suffering on my account, that the pencil was his! Yes, now something told me clearly that it was his pencil I had found! And, it would seem, what could be more natural than to go to him now and give him back what he had lost. Wasn't it time already? But no! It seems natural, but for me, weighted down with fear, grief and shame as I was at the time, it was impossible. It wasn't that I still wanted to keep the pencil for myself—nothing of the kind! It now lay heavy as a stone in my bag and burned my fingers from afar—I wouldn't have touched it then, or even looked at it, for anything in the world! How glad I would have been if someone had forcibly snatched the bag from me and spilled out all its contents, so the pencil could have fallen where Stepan could later pick it up! But nothing like that happened; the schoolboys had other things on their minds.

As soon as they were out of the school and the schoolyard, the schoolboys surrounded the still sobbing Stepan and began to question him, where and how he had lost his pencil, and what sort of pencil it was; some loudly denounced the teacher, others pitied Stepan and told him to be sure to complain to his father.

"H-how d-do I know w-w-where I lost it," Stepan sobbed. "But what will D-dad tell m-me now! H-he b-bought it for me in the c-city only d-day before y-yesterday, and I've l-lost it. Oh-oh-oh!" the poor boy wailed, for he was no less terrified of his father than of the teacher.

"Don't cry, silly, don't be scared," the boys comforted him, though I'm sure that not one of them would have liked to be in Stepan's shoes.

"Aha, d-don't c-cry!" answered Stepan sorrowfully. "He'll k-kill me for that p-pencil! He said he paid six pennies for it in the city. 'If you lose it,' he told me, 'I'll skin you alive, hear me!' . . . Oh-oh-oh!"

I couldn't listen any more. Stepan's every word hurt me

like thorns. I ran home quickly, all a-tremble, pale and breathless.

“Oh, you’ve probably been fighting with the boys already!” cried my aunt when I entered. “Look how you come panting like a bloodhound! Oh, you beggar, you good-for-nothing, useless thing, you outlandish oaf!”

My aunt was twenty-odd years old and not yet married. She was “very good”—at least, you could say that about her tongue, which never liked to be idle and never lacked for words.

I hung up my bag with the books on a peg and sat down to eat without saying a word. Having eaten, I sat at the table and took a book, but not to study my homework—I was in no mood to study; I sat over the book like a stump and re-read the same words a hundred times without being conscious of what I read and what it meant. I tried not to think about Stepan, the teacher or old Leskiv, but their faces continually rose in my thoughts, chilling me to the marrow, gnawing and worrying at me like reminders of old crimes do to a sinner. I wished so hard that night would come already, but the night held off as though it was under a spell. I was afraid to look into the bag with the pencil as though it wasn’t a bag, but a horrible pit, and not a pencil, but a serpent.

I won’t describe the tortures I suffered before night fell. And what awful nightmares I had in the night, how I hollered, how I ran, how I hid, and how lizards ran and flew after me, each with a sharp mouth and “Mittel” written in large letters on its back, and how I was pricked by thorns with shiny yellow skin and six-sided stems, sharpened at the ends—but let all this sink in the well of forgetfulness. Suffice it to say that when I rose in the morning I felt as though I had been beaten black and blue or boiled in a cauldron, and in addition my aunt scolded me for tossing and screaming all night and not letting her sleep.

Early, before I had left for school, my uncle came from

the village and, taking off his heavy cloth gloves from his hands, began to relate the various village news.

“Why did the teacher beat up Leskiv’s Stepan so badly yesterday?” my uncle suddenly asked me. That question frightened me terribly, as though someone had poured boiling water on me.

“Well . . . well . . . well . . . he said that . . . that . . .”

“What’s the matter, can’t you talk, or what?” shouted my aunt, from the side. “So what happened to Stepan?” she asked my uncle.

“The teacher gave him such a beating for some kind of pencil, that the boy barely crawled home alive.”

“What pencil!”

“Well, on Monday his father bought him a pencil, and yesterday he lost it. The teacher was drunk and he began to beat the boy as though he was to blame. The poor kid barely managed to get home, they say. So when he got home and told his story, the old bear went mad and began to beat the child. He took him by the hair and threw him to the floor and put the boots to him! . . . Lord! The old woman began to howl, the boy fainted, they were barely able to bring him to with water, and they say that now he’s in bed, can’t move an inch! Why should they torture a child so! . . .”

Uncle hadn’t finished his story when I burst into tears and interrupted him.

“What’s the matter with you?” uncle asked in amazement.

“Have you gone crazy, boy, or what?” cried my aunt.

“I . . . I . . . I . . .” I stuttered, crying, but my sobs would not let me finish what I wanted to say.

“Well, what is it? Speak up!” said my uncle kindly.

“I . . . I found . . . Stepan’s pencil!”

“You found it? Where? When?”

“Yesterday, by the school, in the snow,” I said more bravely.

“Well, and why didn’t you return it to Stepan?”

“I didn’t know it was his and he didn’t ask.”

“And later, after school?”

"I . . . I was scared."

"Scared? What the bow-legged devil were you scared of?" asked my aunt, but I didn't answer her.

"So where is that pencil?"

"In my bag."

My uncle looked into the bag and took out that ill-fated pencil. I didn't dare to look at it.

"Well, look at it, good people, and for such a trifle they beat a boy so badly! May they both perish!"

Uncle spat and walked out, taking the pencil with him. My aunt pushed me out to go to school. I was still sobbing as I went, and the tears coursed willy-nilly down my cheeks, although my heart had become much lighter.

Stepan didn't come to school that day and all the following week, he was sick in bed. More than that, the next week our teacher also fell ill suddenly—my uncle guessed that old Leskiv must have given him "a good drubbing." I never actually found out if that's what happened—suffice it to say that I didn't see Stepan for two full weeks after that. Oh, how afraid I was to meet him now! How often, in my restless dreams, I saw his good, gentle face, still black and blue, drawn with pain and thin—and with what reproach his goodnatured grey eyes looked at me! And when I did see him, when I heard his voice, all the tortures and perturbations of the past days seemed to revive at once in my soul—but only for a minute. Stepan was now well and happy as of old, he spoke to me kindly, as though there had been nothing between us; and he didn't even mention the pencil. Perhaps he didn't know that I had kept his pencil and so was responsible for his sufferings? I don't know. Anyway, at no time afterwards did we ever talk about the pencil.

# Penmanship

SCHÖN SCHREIBEN

### PENMANSHIP

The original title of this story was in German: "Schon Schreiben." This title itself pointed out that in Austria education in the Ukrainian provinces was conducted in the foreign German tongue. Autobiographical, this story discloses how Ukrainian peasant lads, even when they could afford to go to school, could receive an education only against the greatest opposition of the powers-that-were at that time.

IN THE SPACIOUS Second Grade classroom of the elementary school run by the Basilian Fathers in Drohobich it was so quiet you could sow poppy seeds. The "penmanship" hour was nearing, the period that had everybody in the throes of terror, not because of the subject, but rather because of the teacher. In the Basilian school the Fathers themselves taught all the subjects, and only for writing did they hire a lay teacher, Mr. Walko, a former overseer or manager. It seemed to Mr. Walko, evidently, that he was still an overseer: although it wouldn't do now to walk about with a bull-whip, yet even a cane was not to be scorned, and he never neglected to put it to good use. Naturally, the children, placed if even for only an hour in the power of such a teacher, trembled in anticipation, and the "penmanship period" was to them the greatest torture.

Little Myron alone sat calmly, almost gay, on the bench. He wondered why everything had suddenly become so quiet in the classroom when a daredevil lad, who had been sent out into the corridor as a spy, had run in and cried: "Walko has arrived." That was the exact moment when the classroom became so still. Little Myron had not as yet made Mr. Walko's acquaintance. He had just come from the village school, his father having signed him up for the Second Grade with the Basilian Fathers, and today was his first penmanship period. Although he had been very poor in writing at the

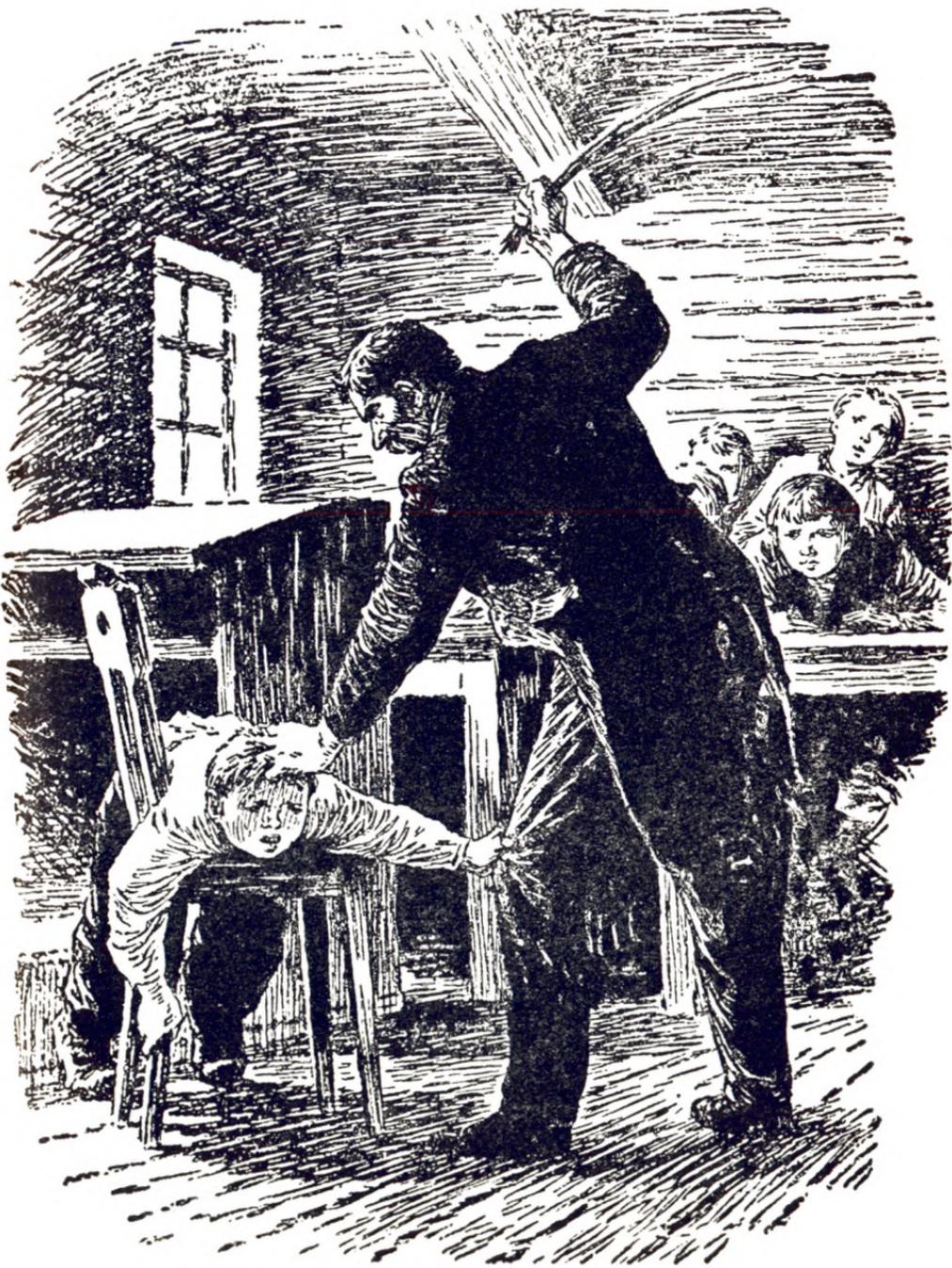
village school—he couldn't hold the pen properly in his fingers, and he couldn't make a single straight and clear stroke with it—still he was only a child and it wasn't in him to worry about something that was yet to be, he didn't even know what. He wondered why everything had suddenly become so quiet, but he lacked the boldness to ask any of his neighbors the reason for it, since he barely knew them as yet. And anyway, he wasn't particularly perturbed. Amid this silence, so fraught with terror and foreboding for the others, he gave himself up the more pleasantly to his favorite pastime: daydreaming about his home. It can't be said that he was homesick: he knew he would be seeing his father and mother every Monday. He only daydreamed about how fine it would be later, some time in the summer, when he would go back home and be able to run freely about the pastures, and sit on the banks of the creek, or wade in it after fish; these thoughts were happy, bright and dazzling, rather than sad or mournful. Little Myron luxuriated in the beauty of Nature, which in his imagination blossomed out inside the cold, grey walls of the Basilian school, and he paid no attention to the peril that was approaching the classroom.

“Hey, why don't you get your scribblers ready for writing?” one of his neighbors asked Myron quietly, digging him in the ribs.

“Huh?” Myron answered, unpleasantly jolted out of his golden daydream.

“Get your scribblers ready for writing!” his comrade repeated, and he showed Myron how to set the scribblers, inkwell and pen according to the rules of Mr. Walko.

“He's coming, he's coming!” the whisper ran through the classroom as though some terrible emperor were approaching, when the steps of the “fine writing” teacher sounded in the corridor. Then the door of the classroom opened and Mr. Walko entered. Myron stole a glance at him. By his appearance, the teacher didn't remind one of an emperor at all. He was a man of middle height, with close-cropped hair on a round, sheep-like head, with short red moustaches and a red Van Dyke beard. His broad face and wide, well de-



veloped jaws, together with his big ears, which were bent to the sides, gave him an expression of dull stubbornness and the appearance of a carnivorous animal. His small toady eyes sat deep in their sockets and blinked from there in a mean and unfriendly manner.

"Now," he shouted menacingly, closing the door of the classroom behind him and waving his thin reed cane about. Like stalks of grain bend together from the wind on a cloudy summer day, so the heads of eight-five pupils bent over their blue and red lined scribblers from that shout. The pen shook in the hand of every pupil. Only little Myron, who did not as yet know Walko's temper, sat with his face up, watching the new teacher.

"What's the matter with you?" Walko shouted to him in a temper, and turned his steps straight in his direction.

Little Myron became petrified from sudden fright. Some subconscious impulse made him turn and arrange his body in the same position that his quaking comrades had been holding for the past minute.

Walko took a piece of chalk in his hand, went up to the blackboard, swung his arm, and began to write. At first he wrote only letters, both capitals and small ones, vowels and consonants, without any meaning whatever. Then he came to words, and finally even to whole sentences, such as: "God created the world," "A man has two hands," and "The earth is our mother." Having exhausted his wisdom in this manner, and having fully demonstrated his knowledge of penmanship by his various flourishes and curlicues, as long as the world and the shape of sausages, Walko laid down the chalk, stepped back, glanced once more with approbation at the board, which was all covered with writing, and then he turned to the trembling class and shouted menacingly:

"Write!"

At that moment his educational duties had been happily concluded and his overseer's duties began. In order to demonstrate this for all to see, he violently shook his fingers, to shake off the chalk dust of education, and took the cane in his hand instead. As an eagle watches for its prey from on

high, so did he look about the class as he came down from the elevation where the teacher's table stood and began making his rounds.

Ill-fate led him first to a tiny, weak and very frightened pupil. He was all in a sweat as he bent over his scribbler and laboured with all his might to hold his pen in his trembling fingers, glancing every moment at the blackboard and trying to draw the same kind of hooks, pots and sausages on the paper as the trained hand of the overseer had traced on the board. But no, his hand was shaking and the pots, hooks and sausages came out broken and uneven—what was more, the disobedient pen twisted about in his fingers, creaked and sputtered as though it was angry at them for some reason and wished to leave those fingers as soon as it could.

Walko stood over him, like an executioner over his victim, and smiling evilly. without saying a word, he began to examine his work. The poor lad sensed trouble and completely lost all command over his hand and the disobedient pen.

"Is that how you write?" Walko hissed slowly, and then his cane whistled through the air and wound about the poor boy's shoulders like a serpent.

"Ow-ow-ow!" he screamed, but he immediately fell silent as he met the menacing reptilian glare of the teacher.

"Can't you write any better?" Walko asked.

"I can, I can!" the boy jabbered and he himself didn't know what he was jabbering.

Perhaps the teacher-overseer actually thought that the boy could write better and was forcing himself to write poorly only to irritate him or because he had a great love for the cane.

"Well, see that you do!" And Walko went on, without waiting to see what saving fruits his thorough teaching had borne. Actually, he was indifferent to those fruits—he was now an overseer and nothing else. His eyes were already turned elsewhere and in another corner of the classroom they had spied another victim. This was a little Jewish boy, who according to the ancient custom of his people wrote back-

wards, trying to reproduce Walko's curlicues from right to left and from the end of the line to the beginning. He had already completed one line in this manner and had just begun another. The written, complete line looked so-so, but the new, uncompleted one, starting from the wrong end, was like a thorn in Walko's eye.

"And how are you writing, Moishe?" he yelled, leaping at the boy.

Walko called all Jews in his class "Moishe," except for the sons of the wealthy city "big shots," for whom he had great respect. When he heard that yell and saw the enemy leaping toward him, the Jewish boy, who was named Yonas Turteltaub, shrivelled up and doubled up like a snail retreating into its shell, and he stopped writing.

"Hahaha!" Walko laughed, inspecting the boy's writing.

"Teacher, sir . . ." the boy began and then got stuck.

"Come here!"

And without waiting for Yonas to walk up from his bench, he took him by the ear and dragged him into the middle of the room.

At the sight of poor Yonka, all shrivelled up, shivering, and with spittle running from his mouth from fright, the entire class broke into loud laughter, although every one of them was himself trembling and cowering . . . But such is the force of tyranny's oppression that it's enough for the tyrant to smile and all who are under his jackboot will roar with laughter, despite the fact that they are laughing at their own misfortune.

"Come to the board! Now, write!"

Walko, with his own hand, rubbed out part of what he himself had written, and shoved a piece of chalk into the boy's hand. The latter began to write as he was accustomed to do, backwards. The class guffawed again, and Walko smiled, but immediately his face became brutal and he turned to the back bench where the biggest and strongest boys sat, and shouted:

"Come on, give it to him!"

The wee lad trembled with his entire body and mumbled

something, but two of his colleagues—myrmidons—rushed to him and led him to the elevation. Silence fell on the classroom. Instead of laughter, each face turned pale—only Yonka's shrieks of pain resounded among the stone walls of the Basilian monastery.

"That's enough for him!" Walko said, and Yonka returned to his seat, sobbing.

Having performed this high pedagogical task, Walko resumed his rounds of the classroom and again his cane fell on the backs and hands of the poor boys.

It is difficult to describe the impression this education made on Myron. He trembled without stop, as in a fever, there was a ringing in his ears, and things spun before his eyes as though he were in the middle of a blizzard. He had a foreboding that the storm would not pass him by. The written words and lines leaped about before his eyes, blew themselves up and got intermixed, looking even worse than they really were. He himself did not know when he stopped writing—a grey mist gathered before his eyes.

"Is that the way you write?" Walko whooped over his head.

Myron came to, seized his pen, dunked it in the inkwell and dragged it along the paper as though he were dragging a buffalo by the horns.

"Don't you know how to hold a pen?"

"I don't know how!" Myron whispered.

"What?" roared Walko. "Haven't I showed you how, not once, but a dozen times?"

Myron turned wondering eyes on the enraged face. But instead of an answer, Walko hit the boy in the face with his closed fist. As though he was cut down by a scythe, little Myron fell to the bench, and from the bench to the floor. Blood covered his face.

"Lift him up!" Walko shouted. Two boys ran up from the back bench, the same who a minute before had given Yonka a hiding, and they lifted up Myron, who had fainted. His head lolled as though he were a corpse.

“Run for water!” Walko further ordered, and he glanced again at Myron.

“Who is this boy?” he asked.

“Myron,” replied the “monitor,” who was the oldest and strongest in class and whom the Fathers had appointed preceptor over his comrades.

“Who is he?” Walko enquired. further.

“The son of a villager from N . . .”

“A peasant’s son! Phew, what business have the damned peasants shoving their noses here!” Walko grumbled. A weight was lifted from his chest. He had begun to get somewhat scared of what he had done, but a peasant’s son—that meant that you could beat him up and bully him as much as you pleased, for nobody would rise in defense of a peasant’s son.

Walko was not mistaken in his reckoning. Nobody said a word in defense of the peasant’s son. For his inhuman deed the teacher got off scot-free as he did for his many other inhuman deeds. Only in the heart of the peasant’s son they did not go scot-free, but became the first seeds of wrath, contempt and eternal hatred of all oppression and tyranny.

# The Constitution for Pigs

СВИНСЬКА КОНСТИТУЦІЯ

### THE CONSTITUTION FOR PIGS

Another sample of Ivan Franko's social satire (taken from the mouths of the people themselves), this story unmasks the fraudulent granting of "democratic liberties" under a Constitution to the people of Austro-Hungary after the uprisings of 1848 and defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1867.

THIS STORY is not my spiritual property. I heard it in Zbarazh, in Eastern Galicia, from an old peasant, Anton Hritsuniak by name, who told it at a public meeting. Hritsuniak is a very interesting phenomenon, one of the few living remnants of that tribe of story-tellers and bandurist-minstrels who composed old *dumi* about the exploits and adventures of the Cossacks Hritsko Zborovsky, Kishka, Bezrodny and Andiber, about the battles waged by Khmelnit-sky against the Poles, and about the tragic escape of the three brothers from Azov, and chanted them to the Cossack troops, who were all ears. His outer appearance in no way is out of the ordinary: he is a common oldster, dressed not finely and even poorly, not very tall, thin, his face furrowed from labour but full of expression, his black eyes bright. He stands out in no way in a crowd of peasants, he injects himself rarely into the conversation, and at first glance does not show any higher order of intelligence than the ordinary level of the Galician peasant. Naturally, he can neither read nor write.

A few minutes before the meeting opened I was talking with several peasants I knew. Hritsuniak came up and we were introduced, exchanged a few words and parted. My acquaintances, mainly young farmers who had finished grammar school and by dint of keen reading had increased

their education, could not praise Hritsuniak highly enough to me for his remarkable oratorical powers and also because he was one of the few people of the older generation who had joined the radical peasant movement heart and soul.

Therefore, it is not strange that I was impatient to hear his speech. But the meeting opened, the points on the agenda were discussed, and decided one by one, and yet Hritsuniak did not ask for the floor. Only when we came to the final point on the agenda, "Motions and questions," did he climb up on the table that served us for a platform, and he did that rather unwillingly, quite evidently giving way to the promptings of acquaintances. When his figure appeared before the gathering, a kind of rustle and whispering swept the hall, and then all present, of whom there were more than 600, tightly packed in a fairly small space, became so quiet you could hear a poppy seed drop.

"Well, if I must speak," Hritsuniak said with complete gravity to those who stood closest to him, "then I must have paper before me. It is true that I'm illiterate, but I know my figures and I can't speak without a paper. Any paper will do, even a tax form."

Loud laughter greeted this opening statement of Hritsuniak's. One of the men who stood closest to him gave him a sheet of paper with no writing whatever on it. Hritsuniak took it in both his hands and, holding it in front of him as though he were reading from it, he began his speech in such a monotonous, lilting chant as though he were mimicking a village pupil who was just learning to read "by rote." Later his voice became much livelier, never departing, however, from that rhythmic tone, as of Biblical prose. Every minute or so the entire meeting interrupted his story with thunderous guffaws, but the speaker never even moved a whisker; to the contrary, as the bursts of general merriment followed fast one on another, his countenance took on an ever more sober, even sombre expression, until at last it achieved complete wooden apathy, the humour and irony

being betrayed only by the extraordinarily flashing eyes under hanging eyebrows.

“Listen, brothers, what a conversation I had recently with a friend of mine. There came to visit me, you see, my friend and boyhood playmate, whom I had not seen for a long time. We greeted each other as is proper and I ask him:

“Well, old friend, how are you? How are things with you?’

“Thank God, I’m not bad and things are good with me,’ he says to me.

“Well that’s good news,’ I say. ‘I would like very much to know what those good things are that you are enjoying?’

“What good things? Well, that’s not hard to answer, and you know it yourself.’

“No, no, you won’t wriggle out of it that way,’ I told him. ‘You must tell me in detail what good things you have met with.’

“Ah, friend,’ he replied, ‘are these not good things that we, thank God, have lived to see? Just think: we no longer do corvee labour for years now, we are all equal before the law, whether you are of the gentry or a peasant, and well, we have a Constitution, thanks be.’

“He had tumbled so much speech out at once that towards the end he was out of breath.

“Hoho, dear friend,’ I said, ‘those are truly fine things that you spoke of here, but do you know that you mustn’t look at them too closely?’

“And why not?’

“For this reason, that they are like those store-bought kerchiefs, they don’t hold colour, and the dye afterwards stains a person’s fingers.’

“My friend couldn’t grasp that, so I continued talking to him:

“You see, my friend, it’s absolutely true that we aren’t forced to do corvee labour now. But would you like to

recall a little more clearly what it used to be like then, and how it is now with us?

“Since my friend couldn’t recall those things very clearly, I had to help him out with my memory:

“ ‘Isn’t it true? In those days the master’s otaman used to come very early every day and go from house to house in the village, knocking with his cane on the doors and hollering: “Hey, you, Ivan, Hrits, Stepan, hurry to do corvee or there’ll be work for the birch rods!” ’

“ ‘That’s right, that’s right, that’s how it was then,’ said my friend and involuntarily he scratched himself in the place where at that moment he didn’t itch.’

“ ‘And how is it with us now? No longer does the otaman go house to house through the village with his cane, that’s true. But what does the peasant do? I’ll tell you what he does, dear friend. The peasant gets up of his own will early as early can be, he takes a hen or a basket of eggs and he goes to that same otaman—now he’s called “the manager”—and he places his gift before him and begs, “bowing before your worship,” to let him go to do corvee labour on the master’s fields. And if he should come without a gift, then the manager gives him a cuff on the nape and kindly leaves him freedom . . . to die of starvation.’

“My poor friend could find nothing to answer me with, and only sighed deeply and nodded his head.

“ ‘And we’re also equal under the law, as you say, dear friend,’ I continued to talk to him. “That must also be true, though up to now I somehow hadn’t noticed it. Whenever I come to the county chief or the judge, or even to the county autonomous department, I still keep hearing the same as prior to 1848: “Wait, peasant! Get out of here, peasant!” And when I once tried to be smart and cited my equality before the law, I received a blow that was just as strong and set ears ringing just as much as in the times of the otamans. But just look you when the landowner, or the overseer or even the common lessee walk into the office, they are never left to wait outside, but are invited to sit



*Entrance to the Ivan Fedorov printing shop in Lvov, the first in Ukraine established by the famed Russian printer in the year 1573. Here were printed some of Franko's first works.*

down at once and are treated so politely, so delicately! . . . Well, we had that same sort of equality before 1848 too!

“ ‘But there were beatings then!’ my friend interjected and again involuntarily he scratched himself in the spot where he didn’t itch.

“ ‘You are right,’ I answered him, ‘there were beatings then, but now they have invented something that takes the place of birch rods entirely! And even more, perhaps. Listen to what a neighbour of mine told the county chief. You see, something led my neighbour, a most peaceful person, to go to Vienna — you know, with that large delegation that journeyed to the emperor to complain of all the ills which the people suffered from Governor Badeni. Well, you know what happened then . . . the delegation heard whatever there was to hear in Vienna, but when it returned home, all the poor delegates were dragged off to hearings and punished. This good fortune didn’t miss my neighbour, either: the county chief sentenced him to pay a fine of fifty rinskys cash. Hearing this verdict, my neighbour gathered up courage and says: ‘Sir county chief,’ he says, ‘I’m a poor man. If I have committed such a terrible crime in that I journeyed to the emperor to complain of the most excellent soym elections, there is nothing to be done, I’m prepared to take my just punishment. But my wife and my children are completely innocent of this crime of mine, so why are you punishing them? Punish me alone, and not them. When you place such a monetary fine on me, in order to get the money to pay it I must sell my last cow and the last pig too, and thus the punishment will be worse for my household than on me myself. Therefore I beg you, your excellency county chief, couldn’t you change that punishment from a fine to a beating? I’m a strong and healthy man, thank God, and somehow I’ll survive fifty blows with a rod, but God is my witness that my farm won’t survive a fine of fifty rinskys!’ That’s what my poor neighbor said to the county chief, but the county chief would not grant his plea, because, said he, we are now equal before

the law, there are no more beatings, and whatever you're fined you must pay even if you tear it from your own body. And so my poor neighbor is now waiting for the state sale and robbery of all his property, which is due any day, because he still hasn't paid that fine. Well, and what do you say, my dear friend, of those modern birch rods that, instead of beating one part of the body, beat the entire man and his whole family to boot?

"My friend again had no reply handy, and only sighed heavily.

" 'And we've got a Constitution, too,' after a moment's silence I resumed my conversation with my friend, 'certainly we have! They say it's very fine and magnificent. Did you ever see it, dear friend?'

" 'See it?' my friend was puzzled. 'I saw it on paper, printed in a book, why shouldn't I?'

" 'Oh no, I'm not talking about the paper one,' I answered, 'but about the real one, the way it looks in reality. Have you ever seen this real, living Constitution?'

" 'But how can it be seen? After all, we all live under it, we feel it . . .'

" 'Oh certainly, we feel it, it's the truth you have said. But I have seen it with my own eyes and want to tell you about it. I was driving one time with my two sons to Ternopol to market. In front of me a farmer I didn't know was driving with his wife. This man was seated up front, driving the horses, while his wife sat on the seat in the back, and between them, with straw heaped about it and its legs well tied, lay a large, fat pig which they were taking to the town to sell, and it calmly stuck its head with its floppy ears out of the wagon. We come to Ternopol and cross the toll-gate, when we see an elderly gent sitting by the toll-shed with a bright knife in his hand, and he is smoking a pipe with a long stem . . . so long. As soon as he saw the wagon with the pig he jumped up from the bench and shouted loudly:

" 'Stop, peasant!'

“The farmer halted the wagon and the gent with the knife approached them.

“ ‘What have you in the wagon?’ he asked severely.

“ ‘A pig, begging your worship’s favour,’ the farmer replied humbly.

“ ‘I can see for myself that it’s a pig, but how are you transporting it? Ha! Can’t you see how the poor animal’s feet have swollen from the rope? Why, you scamp, you good-for-nothing, don’t you know that it is forbidden to torture a poor creature so?’

“Saying this, the gent approached the pig and cut the ropes on it so quickly with his knife, that in his haste he wounded the pig’s legs.

“ ‘March to the police station! You must be punished as you deserve!’ hollered the implacable gent, the emancipator of hogs.

“The farmer sat petrified on the wagon; he had begun to excuse himself to the angry gent, but no go, he wouldn’t even listen to him. But the farmer’s wife was evidently more shrewd. She figured out how to avoid trouble. While her husband was trying to convince the unyielding gent, she pulled out a red kerchief from her bosom, dug in it for a minute or so, brought out 20 kreizers that had been tied in one corner (she had worked at least two days, to be sure, and gone faint from hunger to earn them), tucked them into the intransigent gent’s palm and then began to add her pleas to those of her husband. Only then did the implacable gent soften up a little, and he said:

“ ‘Well, this time I’m letting you go free, but remember this as long as you live!’

“During this to-do I had driven a bit ahead with my wagon, but I told the boys to stop the horses because I wanted to see how the matter would end. We waited a while until the farmer with the pig had passed us again. But the set-up in the wagon was altogether different now than before. The wife was sitting in the front and driving the horses, while the man was sitting in the back and holding the pig

about the neck with both arms. And the pig, freed from the ropes, now stood up straight in the wagon and gazed about on all sides, and every second it was being frightened by some new object it saw and every moment it was ready to jump. And it didn't take long before a bright gentleman's four-in-hand drove up, the horses jogging along, the bells tinkling and the coachman snapping his whip. The pig took a terrible fright, jerked to the side and jumped out of the wagon. Evidently the farmer who was holding the beast about the neck was weaker than it was, and he also flew out of the wagon and fell so unfortunately that he tore his face against a rock and set it bleeding, while the pig took to its heels! At last my boys leaped off our wagon and caught it and helped the farmer lead it to the marketplace. And that, my friend, is how that Constitution for *pigs* looks!

"But that isn't all yet.

"On the afternoon of the same day I was returning from Ternopol, leaving early so as to get home before dark. We neared the toll-gate and there was that strict gent with the bright knife still sitting there, calmly puffing on the pipe with the long stem. I let my eyes wander over the suburban fields and suddenly I noticed, far out on the highway, two men in peasant garb marching in step towards the town.

"'Well, those fellows doubtlessly served in the army,' I thought to myself, 'and learned their hay-foot, straw-foot so thoroughly there that even yet, when they're getting on in years, they keep in step and march straight in a row.

"But when they came closer, I saw something dark behind them and something bright, like a long tongue of flame, sticking up above their heads. It didn't take great wisdom then to guess that this was a gendarme. And when they came closer yet I heard at every step they took the soft music: cling-clang! cling-clang!

"'Aha,' thought I to myself, 'that explains it! That's why they keep time so strictly and march so straight in a row! But just you wait, sir gendarme! Wait till you come to the toll-gate! When the angry gent with the bright knife catches

sight of you with those poor men manacled together so cruelly, then you'll learn whether it's permissible to torture baptized creatures so!"

"I was already quaking in my heart for fear that the angry gent, in his great haste to knock off the shackles with which the unfortunate men were bound, would cut their hands the way he did the pig's feet. I was no less curious to see how the angry gent would go after the inhuman gendarme and take him off to the police station. The two manacled men and the gendarme crossed the toll-line unmolested and walked past the angry gent. And the angry gent not only did not sharply attack the gendarme, but to the contrary! He rose and bowed to him very politely, and I went along home with my nose hanging down like this. So there you are, my dear friend,' I finished my talk with him, 'that's what the Constitution for *peasants* looks like. A peasant must envy a common pig."

The roar of applause that rose after that speech continued for quite a while. When it died down old Hritsuniak added:

"Pardon me, my dear folks, actually I should have told you this under the 'Reasons for emigration' item on the agenda, but I think that it still wasn't too late."

And with those words he got down from the table.

To the Light!

ДО СВІТЛА!

### TO THE LIGHT!

Thrice imprisoned himself, Ivan Franko learned to know the brutal penal system in Austria-Hungary very well and wrote many stories and verses on prison themes, of which "To the Light!" is probably the most famous. It is given here in slightly abridged form.

*(The prisoner's story)*

IT WAS EXACTLY two years ago. I was then in this same hole. There were only two of us in the cell, I and some gentleman, Zhurkovsky by name. I can't recall any longer who he was and what he was in for.

One evening, after night inspection, when we had already undressed and gone to bed, we suddenly heard the warden's footsteps and the grinding of keys in the locks. Finally he opened the door and let a strip of yellow light from his lantern into the cell, in which light we saw a huddled, half-naked, thin figure. The warden pushed it forward into the cell, for it evidently couldn't manage it by itself.

"Here are your blanket and your sheet," he shouted, throwing those articles on the newcomer's head and almost tumbling him to the floor. "Lie down and sleep! You'll get your utensils tomorrow."

With these words the warden locked the door and went away. The cell became dark as a cellar and quiet as a tomb. Only we could hear a sound as of somebody chopping meat on a block — that was our comrade's teeth rattling. You see, it was already late autumn and bitterly cold.

"Who are you?" I asked my frozen comrade, without getting out of bed. Once a man has got warmed up, he doesn't like to get up, because it's cold in the cell, since the window has to be kept open for air day and night.

Our comrade kept silent, only his teeth began to chatter

harder than ever, and through that rattle you could hear a broken sob once in a while. I took pity on the lad, for already I perceived that he must be a complete greenhorn. So I got up and made his bed for him in the dark.

"Now, now," I said, "be quiet, stop crying! Undress and go to sleep!"

"I . . . I . . . I c-c-can't," he barely mumbled.

"Why?"

"I . . . I . . . I'm terribly c-c-cold."

Lord! I went up to him and there he was, frozen stiff as a bone, unable to move hand or foot. I don't know how he managed to come as far as the cell. The gentleman got up, too, and we took his rags off to the bare skin, and gave him a good rub-down, wrapped him up in the sheet and blanket and put him in the bed. A quarter of an hour later I could hear him sighing and moving about.

"Do you feel better now?" I asked.

"Better."

"Can you feel your arms and legs?"

"Not altogether, but somewhat better already."

"Where are you from?"

"From Smerekovo."

"The gendarme must have brought you, then?"

"Umhuh. He drove me all day, since morning, through the frost, and me practically naked, hungry and barefoot. I fell down a dozen times on the way because I couldn't go any farther. So he hit me with a leather thong — and I had to keep on. Only at the inn in Zboyiski we rested a bit, the innkeeper gave me whiskey."

"What's your name?"

"Yosko Shtern."

"Ah! So you're a Jew?"

"Umhuh, a Jew."

"Well, the devil take you! You could have killed me if I could have guessed from your talk that you're a Jew, you speak our language so well."

"You see, sir, I grew up in the village, among the peasants. I was a cowherd."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"What did they drag you all the way to this jailhouse for?"

"Oh sir, I don't know! The gendarme said my master charged me with burglary, but honest to God, I didn't steal anything. Just my papers, honest, just my papers!"

And he began to sob and bawl like a baby.

"Now, now, pipe down, you silly," I told him. "You'll tell it to the judge tomorrow, it's none of my concern. Now go to sleep."

"Oh sir, the gendarme said they'll hang me for it!" Yosko wailed.

"Have you gone crazy, you fool!" I yelled. "Laugh at that! Where did you ever hear of them hanging people for such trifles?"

"And my master said they'd put me in prison for ten years."

"Now, now, don't worry," I said. "God is merciful and somehow it will all work out. Just you go to sleep now, and we'll talk it over tomorrow!"

We fell silent and soon I was snoring. The only thing good for me in prison is that I sleep like a rabbit in a cabbage patch.

\* \* \*

It wasn't until the next day that we got a good look at the newcomer. . . . And he also began to look about the cell like a scared squirrel. He had risen while the gentleman and I were still in bed, washed, made his bed and sat on it in a corner without a murmur.

"Well, are you hungry?" I asked.

He didn't say a word, only huddling more than ever.

"Did you eat anything yesterday?" the gentleman asked.

"Well . . . yesterday . . . when the gendarme was about to take me away, the reeve's wife gave me some borshch and a piece of bread."

"Aha, now we know!" the gentleman smiled.

He gave him a goodly hunk of bread and a cutlet from yesterday for his breakfast. The poor fellow started shaking.

He wanted to say his thanks, but only tears come to his eyes.

\* \* \*

"Well, tell us what terrible burglary you committed that the gendarme threatened you with the gallows for it," the gentleman asked him after it was evident that the lad had calmed down somewhat and got settled.

"Oh sir," said Yosko and he began to tremble all over, "there is much to tell and little to hear. It's a very stupid story."

"Now, now, you tell it and we'll listen. We haven't anything smarter to do here anyhow, so we can listen to a stupid story."

\* \* \*

*(Yosko's Story)*

I grew up in the house of Moshko, the innkeeper at Smerekovo. At first I played with his children and called Moshko "tateh" and Moshko's wife "mameh." I thought they were my parents. But soon I noticed that Moshko gets his children fine overcoats, and his wife gives them white shirts every Friday, while at the same time I go dirty and ragged. When I was seven they told me to mind the geese to keep them out of mischief. Moshko's wife didn't pay any attention whether it was cold, or if it rained, or if it was hot, she chased me out of the house to the pasture, at the same time giving me less and less to eat. I was hungry and often I cried in the pasture, but that didn't help me. The village boys treated me better. They gave me bread and cheese and let me take part in their games. I got used to them and later I started giving them a hand tending their geese. I was strong and wiry for my age and the village farmwives began to trust me with the geese, and later with the calves, when their children had to go to school. For that I would get bread and warm food from them and often a few pennies on a holiday. Moshko's wife was very miserly, so she was glad I didn't ask for food at home. But when Moshko's children learned that I ate peasant food, they called me non-kosher and began to tease

me and later to snub me. At first this didn't bother me, but soon I felt this unfriendliness very painfully.

Moshko hired a belfer to teach his boys reading and writing. That was in winter, when I also had free time. But when I went with them, so I could learn too, the boys began to holler, and they pushed me and pinched me, and then tearfully told their mother that they wouldn't study alongside a non-kosher. I could see that Moshko's wife set them up to it, because that witch hated me very much, though I don't know why. So when the children raised a cry, she ran in at once and pushed me out of the room, saying that education wasn't for me, and that they were too poor to have a belfer for a beggar. I cried, but what could I do? So I would go to the village and play with the village boys, or watch the adults fixing their wagons, sleighs or other equipment. Often a whole mob of us would run to the blacksmith, whose smithy was at the other end of the village, and watch him work by the hour. Since I was the strongest of the boys, the smith would often tell me to blow the bellows, or pound with the hammer, or turn the grindstone. How happy I was then! How intensely I wished that, if education wasn't for me, then if I could at least learn such a trade.

In spring I went back to the pasture-land, to the geese and calves which Moshko bought up in the neighboring villages, kept awhile, and then took to Lvov to sell. The pasture in Smerekovo is vast, with bushes here and there, so I didn't have much running-around to do. I would sit down on a hillock somewhere, sharpen up my knife and set about whittling, carving, putting hings together out of wood, at first little ladders, plows and harrows, and later, cages, windmills and such. After a year's time I was good at it, the village boys couldn't hold a candle to me. I began to manufacture rattles and screeching scarecrows to keep the birds out of the wheat, millet and hemp, and I sold several such scarecrows for ten pennies apiece. I soon earned enough to buy myself some carpenter's tools: chisels, drills, and such. I tried my hand at ever bigger things, because I had a liking for it. Whatever I saw, right away I'd like to make one like

it. In winter I'd spend days at the cabinet maker's or the blacksmith's, helping them and learning their work. I was sixteen already and yet Moshko didn't give a thought about doing something with me—he had made a cowherd of me and didn't care about anything further. I didn't even know who my father was or who my family were. In the village they only knew that Moshko had brought me from somewhere when I was a baby; there was even a rumor that I was the son of a relative of Moshko's, who died without leaving anybody but me, and that he had left a good-sized property, which Moshko was said to have taken to himself.

"It's a pity, Yosko," the peasants often said to me. "You're such a quick lad and you'd like to know a trade, yet what will become of you?"

"What else?" I would answer. "I'll be the village cowherd."

"Moshko has no conscience, that he neglects you like that!"

"He says he's poor, hasn't got the means," I would say.

"Don't you believe the old cheat! He has money, and plenty of it, too, but he's saving it all for his own brats. And he didn't even teach you how to pray to God."

This sort of talk got me worked up. I began to try to figure things out.

"Actually," I thought, "why do I sit around here? I'll always have time to work for Moshko for nothing. If I could at least learn a good trade, then I could make a living for myself. But how to do it? How to get free of Moshko? Where can I go, especially since I don't even know where I come from, who my father was, or if I have any family?"

Our inn stood beside the highway. Often the gendarmes would stop there, many times escorting handcuffed people they had arrested and were taking to Lvov or Zhovkva. At first I was terribly afraid of those strong, stern men in their dark uniforms, with rifles slung over their shoulders, and wearing hats with plumes of bright cock's feathers. I often listened with fear and trembling as they talked with Moshko or the local farmers. Usually they spoke of things that were

frightening to me, such as fires, thieves and tramps, and in these conversations I very often heard the word "documents." "If he has no documents, hold him." "Aha, I look and his documents aren't in order." "If he had had at least one good document on him, I'd have let him go." I wonder what those documents are, I often thought, that they have such a power that they can protect a passing person from a gendarme with a rifle and a plume? I couldn't find an answer to that question, and all the time I was getting more and more worried about those documents. How can I go out into the world if I have no documents? Why, I'd no sooner set out than a gendarme would nab me and take me God knows where and submit me to God knows what kind of tortures. I shivered all over at the very thought. The more I thought about getting free of Moshko, the more those documents appeared before my eyes. I even dreamed about documents, yellow with age, with tremendous seals on them, that looked at me with stern, wrinkled faces or laughed at me with horrid, toothless mouths. At such times I was very unhappy. Whoever I asked, all affirmed that without documents I could neither leave the village nor be taken on as an apprentice anywhere. But where could I get those documents? The smith advised me to ask Moshko about them, since he must have taken some documents of my father's.

Ask Moshko! As if it was so easy for me to approach Moshko. Earlier, when I was small, he was kinder to me, but when I began to grow up, he left me completely at the mercy of his wife, the witch, and almost never spoke to me. It even seemed to me that he kept away from me. From the time when people told me that he must have taken some money that was left by my father, I began to watch him more closely; I could see that this attention annoyed him. Whenever we happened to be together alone, he would twist and turn as though something was biting him. Suppose, I figured to myself, I press him suddenly, when his wife isn't home, maybe I'll learn something from him? I decided to make use of the next opportunity to do this.

Such an occasion arose soon after. Moshko's wife went to

Zhovkva and Moshko was alone in the inn, so I came up to him and said:

“Reb Moishe, people say you have some sort of documents that were left by my father.”

Moshko jumped as though he had been stung by a hornet.

“How do you know that?”

“People say.”

“What people?”

“All the people, the whole village.”

“Well, and why are you interested in documents? You can’t even read or write!”

“That’s so. But still I’d like to know. So you do have them?”

“I do, I do have those beggar’s documents!” shouted Moshko irritably, as though I had told him something terribly unpleasant. “Your father was a wastrel, he wasted away his property, and left you to me, worse luck. What use are you to me!”

“D’you know, Reb Moishe,” I said, “give me those documents and I’ll go away, since I’m of no use to you.”

“What?” screamed Moshko. “You want to go away? And where would you go, stupid?”

“I’d like to sign on as an apprentice, and learn a trade.”

Moshko roared with laughter.

“Go, go, cabbagehead, do you think anybody’ll take you in! To get apprenticed you have to pay, and also you must know how to read and write, and not in Yiddish, either, but in goyish.”

I stood as though transfixed. Finally, I managed to speak:

“Then show me those documents, at least, so I can see them!”

“Phew!” cried Moshko. “You’re hanging on to me like a burr to a sheepskin coat! All right, come, I’ll show you your treasures! You’re lucky I haven’t burned them as yet!”

That last remark cut into my heart like a knife. What if Moshko had actually burned my documents? I would have been left all alone in the world, like a leaf torn from a tree. I wouldn’t have known myself what family I come from, and

nobody would know me. I wouldn't be able to move from one place to another. I'd be chained forever to Moshko's shop, a slave until I died. I was seized by a fit of trembling at this thought . . . With a great deal of effort I pulled myself together and then calmly followed Moshko to the store-room.

The store-room was a wooden addition built on to the inn from the back, with the entrance from the hallway. It had but one small window, criss-crossed with iron bars. That's where Moshko stored all the articles which he got from the peasants when they hocked things with him, and all his valuables. It was piled with sheepskin coats, fur caps and boots; in the chest there were jewels and it was even rumored that at the bottom he had ancient ducats and thalers. Thieves had tried to break into that store-room several times, but they never succeeded, because it was strongly built and Moshko kept good watchdogs. The door to the store-room was low and narrow. Moshko had to bend to get inside. I squeezed in behind him.

"And why are you here?" he barked at me.

"What do you mean? You told me to come!"

"But not in here! Wait in the hall!"

"It makes no difference," I said. "I'll wait here just as well. After all, I won't eat up anything of yours."

Moshko opened his eyes wide and looked at me as though he was seeing me for the first time in his life. I don't know what it was about me that wasn't to his liking, but he spat and turned away. Then he climbed up on the chest, put his hand into a shelf that was built right near the ceiling, and took out a stack of yellowed papers.

"Here are your valuables," he bumbled, showing them to me from a distance.

"Give them to me so I can get a look at them," I said, stretching out my hand.

"What are you going to see in them, you fool?" Moshko answered. "And of what use are they to you? Stay with me, it's good for you here, and don't go looking up trouble for yourself!"

And he put the papers back again on the shelf.

"Let's go out of here," he said. "Now you can be at peace. And don't you believe what the people have been telling you about me, for I know that people have long tongues. It's all lies."

"What is lies?" I asked.

"Talking to you is like throwing peas against the wall," Moshko grumbled and practically pushed me out of the store-room, and then, locking it up securely, he went to the inn.

\* \* \*

*(The Prisoner's Story)*

But Yosko wasn't able to finish his story at that time because exactly at that moment the doors of our cell opened. Yosko was called out for his hearing.

"That's a remarkable boy," the gentleman muttered, and lost in thought, he began to pace about the cell.

"To me it seems as though he lies a lot," I said. "He learned to spin yarns to the peasants and is spinning us one too."

"Do you think so?"

"Well, it could be, couldn't it?"

"Certainly, it could be, but his face speaks in his favour. Anyway, we'll still have time to find out, little by little."

Yosko was not kept long at the hearing, not more than half an hour. He returned much more happy and serene than he had been when he went.

"Well, what?" I asked him. "Did the judge gobble you up?"

"Oh no, the judge is a good man," Yosko said. "I confess that I was terribly scared of him at first. In the village they told me that they beat you during the hearings, and burn your soles with red-hot irons."

"Hahaha!" I laughed. "Now I know why you tossed and hollered and groaned so much in your sleep. You must have dreamed that they were burning your soles."

"Please, don't laugh. I get scared just to remember those dreams in which I suffer so much. And all for nothing. The

judge is so good-natured, he talked to me as to a human being, he didn't shout and he didn't fume, and he didn't beat me as the gendarme did."

"Oh, and did the gendarme beat you?" Mr. Zhurkovsky asked.

"Oh sir, I thought he would beat the soul out of me. Just look at my back!"

And Yosko took off his shirt. We cried out from shock! The boy's whole back was covered with bruises and welts with dried blood.

"Well, and what did the judge ask you?" Zhurkovsky broke the silence first.

"About that unfortunate robbery, how it took place."

"And what did you do?"

"What else? I told him everything, how it all happened, and that's all. He wrote down my statement, and told them to take me away."

"So now tell us how it all happened, too."

\* \* \*

*(Yosko's Story)*

You already know what kind of life I led at Moshko's. I didn't want to stay there any longer, and also I was afraid that if I mentioned the documents to him again, he'd go and burn them up. So I made up my mind to steal them myself. I could get into the store-room more easily than outside robbers, because the dogs knew me, and also because I knew all the ins and outs and the habits of the people of the house. At first I wanted to steal the keys from Moshko, but he evidently smelled something, for he always carried them on his person or else hid them somewhere so well that I couldn't find them. I was burning up with impatience, once I had decided to get my documents. I couldn't think of anything else, but that. And then, why should I think about it so long? One night, when they were all asleep, I quickly whittled a groove in a post in the store-room (it was built of posts), sprung the lock with a chisel, crawled into the store-room and took my documents. And that was that...

As soon as I had the documents in my hands, without even looking through them or untying the string which was tied around them, I wrapped them in a rag, shoved them in my shirt front, and left Moshko's inn. "Where to go now?" I thought to myself. Fear had not yet completely left me. What if Moshko had cheated me, showing me some stupid papers, instead of my documents? What if I took some other bunch by mistake in the dark? I simply had to get somebody's advice on what to do in that case. So, having spent the night in the first haystack I came to, next morning I went to the blacksmith, whom I knew, and told him everything. He was the first to pour cold water on me.

"You've done wrong, lad," he said. "Hurry to the reeve, tell him everything, and give those documents over to him!"

Those words caused a faintness to come to my heart. But what could I do? I could see that the advice was good, so I went. As I came to the reeve's place, I could see from the yard yet, through the window, that a gendarme was sitting at the table. At once something seemed to whisper to me that this was going to be the death of me. I turned to stone and couldn't walk another step. The thought flashed through my head: run! But it was too late. The reeve saw me and shouted joyfully:

"There he is himself! Talk of the devil! Come closer, come on!"

I saw that everything was known already, and that they were after me. So screwing up all my courage, I went into the house.

"What's your name?" the gendarme asks me.

"Yosko Shtern."

"Where were you born?"

"I don't know."

"Aha, that means you're a tramp."

I stood, rooted to the spot. I had often heard that awful word and also had heard terrible stories about what gendarmes do to tramps, and had always feared that the most. And here, from the very first instant, I myself landed in that position.



*Young Canadians of Ukrainian origin stop at the grave of Ivan Franko during a visit to Lvov in 1951.*

“But I’m a local boy,” I groaned. “The reeve knows me.”

“I? Know you?” the reeve says to me. “You’re lying, my dear fellow! I know you to see you, and I know that you’re called Yosko and that you work for Moshko the innkeeper, but who you are and where you came from, that I don’t know.”

“Aha, that means that he’s lying to our faces!” shouted the gendarme and wrote something down in his notebook. “Come here,” he then said to me. “Closer! Look me in the eyes!”

The moment I raised my eyes to his, he hit me with his heavy fist in the face so hard that I fell to the ground and was instantly bathed with blood.

"Get up at once!" the gendarme shouted at me. "And don't you dare holler, or you'll get some more. Now answer truthfully to what I'm going to ask you. Do you work at Moshko's?"

"Yes."

"Did you rob him?"

"No."

"What do you mean, no?"

Once again I looked up at the gendarme, wiping the blood from my face with my sleeve, and once again a hefty wallop sent me sprawling to the ground.

"Mister gendarme," the reeve said, while I was struggling to rise, "as the head of the village I can't look on while an arrested person is being treated in such manner. I'm only supposed to be present at the hearing, and have nothing to do with what goes on before the hearing. If you want to coach him in what he should say, choose some other place. You can't do it here."

The gendarme bit his lip, then without a word he rose from the bench, took a pair of handcuffs from his case, put them on me, and led me to Moshko at the inn. I won't start telling you what happened to me there and how they coached me to make my statement. I fainted several times during that coaching. And no wonder they were so angry. I had done them a great injury. Moshko had told the gendarme first thing that I had stolen from him a great deal of money, wrapped in papers. He thought that when the gendarme would catch me and bring me to the inn, he could take the documents from me at once and burn them, and I would remain his slave forever. As soon as I stepped into the inn, his first question was:

"Where is the money?"

"I don't know. I didn't take any money."

"And where are the documents?"

"I hid them."

"Where did you hide them?"

"I won't tell you."

They began persuading me to tell, first with blows and

then with kind words, but I had only one answer: "I took the documents because they are mine. I didn't even look into them. I hid them and won't show them to anybody, on'y to the reeve."

Moshko nearly went mad. Out of malice he ordered my boots and clothes to be torn off me and these rags put on instead. Finally, badly beaten up and practically naked, I was taken to the reeve. There they again began to ask me about the documents. But I'm not a fool. Only when I saw that there was a large number of witnesses in the house did I go into the hall and extract the documents from a crack. The hallway in the reeve's house was large and dark. When I was on my way to the house and saw the gendarme there, I had shoved my package into the crack, so that they couldn't take it away from me. When Moshko saw the papers in the gendarme's hands, he rushed up, cawing like a crow that this was his money and to give it to him.

"Hoho, Mister Moshko," replied the reeve, "that won't go. We have to present all that as evidence in court. We'll have the hearing here, and when the boy confesses that he stole that package, it will be the business of the court to say what is to be done with it then. We'll seal everything, just as it is, with the village seal, and Mister gendarme will deliver it together with the arrested person to Lvov. And you will have to seek justice for yourself at the court."

At this my Moshko made such a wry face as though he had drunk a quart of his own liquor. But nobody paid any attention to that. The gendarme sat down to write his report. When it was all written, the reeve's wife gave me a bite to eat, the gendarme put the handcuffs on me again, and we left for Lvov. I thought I'd die of pain and frost on the way, and I still don't know how I survived. Oh sir, what do you think will happen to me now?

\* \* \*

*(The Prisoner's Story)*

Several days later Mr. Zhurkovsky said to Yosko:

"Listen, my boy, would you like me to teach you to read?"

Yosko stared at the gentleman open-mouthed.

"Well, what are you gaping at? If you want to, in a couple of days you'll know how to read. And if I see that you're not lying and that you have a good memory, I'll see to it that you're taken on at a trade school and learn whatever trade you wish."

"Oh sir!" Yosko cried and fell at the gentleman's feet. Overwhelmed, he couldn't utter another word, only wept and kissed the gentleman's hands.

Next day they brought the gentleman a primer and he began teaching Yosko to read. In two days the little Jew could already recognize and put the letters together, and in a week he read short pieces quite fluently. He went at it, as the saying is, like the Jew went at dancing the kolomeika. I could see that he would have read day and night, only that we had no light in the night. He could hardly tear himself away for a minute to eat his meals.

When it turned dark and he couldn't read any more, Yosko would sit on his bed in the corner, his feet tucked under him and his hands embracing his knees, and sitting doubled up like that, he would begin to tell us fairy tales. He kept telling them without end, and although you saw that he was repeating the same marvels over and over again, still he was able to embroider and tell them differently every time. And sometimes it was evident that he was relating his own daydreams to us. He told of a poor boy who lived in terrible circumstances, then he met a good magician and learned the magic words and charms from him, and then he went into the world to make his fortune and to help others. With penetrating but simple words he depicted his sufferings and adventures, his encounters with gendarmes, his slavery at the innkeeper's, often comically mixing up the fairy tale stuff with his own experiences.

I have never seen a boy take to books so passionately as Yosko. It seemed as though he wanted to make up in a few weeks what had been neglected for a dozen years. What worried him most was the shortness of the autumn days, and in the cell it turned dark very early indeed. Our lone little

window was turned to the east and it was situated practically by the ceiling, so it was miserly in letting light through even at mid-day; at four o'clock you couldn't read any longer. And as for Yosko, he would eagerly have doubled the length of the day. Finally, he exclaimed joyfully:

"I've got it. I'll read by the window. It gets light there sooner and stays light later than in the cell."

"You won't be comfortable if you read standing up on the scaffolding," I told him. "And anyway, it's too high for you."

"I will sit as high up as I want," he said.

"How will you manage it?"

"I will tie the sheet with both ends to the bars and in the middle I will put my blanket, all rolled up, and I'll sit in it like in a hammock."

This invention actually proved very practical and since then all jailbirds use it. Yosko simply adored that window for several days. He would get up at six, just when it was beginning to dawn, make his hammock, and climbing into it, pore over his book, pressing his forehead against the bars to get as much of God's light as he could. The gentleman and I took turns watching at the door to hear when the warden was coming, so we could warn Yosko in time to climb down and take his seat down, for the inmates were strictly forbidden to sit by the windows. Thus we always managed to avoid unpleasantness . . .

But misfortune came from another direction.

Apart from the guards in the corridor, we have another: outside beneath the windows, a soldier with a rifle walks back and forth. He has strict orders to see that inmates don't look out of the windows, and particularly that they don't talk with one another through the windows. Army rules oblige him to use arms in case of insubordination. Up till then, it's true, there had been no such occasion. It had to be something really big for the guard to leave his beat and report to his superior that people were looking out or talking out of such and such a window. The older soldiers were already accustomed to the recognition that rules are one thing and adherence to them is another, and they usual-

ly didn't stick to the rules very strictly. Many a soldier calmly permitted all kinds of conversation . . . others gently reproved or asked inmates to cease. It was worse, however, when it happened that a new recruit, who feared the corporal more than the devil, was on guard. Such a one took every order literally. When he was told to keep "strict watch," he understood this to mean that if an inmate showed his head in the window he must abuse him with the filthiest epithets, report him to the commander, and even reach for his rifle. The inmates revenged themselves on such "rookies" by making the wildest noises at the windows during their watch, particularly in the evenings, so that the poor recruit was often driven nearly mad and considered it his sacred duty to reply to every shout from the windows with an even louder and angrier bellow. Since there were usually a good many prisoners and he was but one, after a few minutes of hellish noise he would have to shut up and, since he couldn't restore order otherwise, grab for his gun. At that moment, of course, the windows he was facing would become completely empty, but shouts would start at the other end of the long jailhouse, and the guard would run there like a frenzied beast and again threaten with his rifle—naturally, with the same result.

Such rows usually took place in the evening, although they also happened in the day time. So misfortune willed it that one day such a din took place between three and five, when exactly such a recruit was on watch. He started by saying some vile words to an inmate who was looking out the window. The sign was given to treat the guard to "cat's music." Suddenly, from different ends of the jailhouse, and from different storeys, out of some 'teen windows came hoots, challenges, whistles and insulting meows. The recruit shouted and ran beneath all the windows, but he couldn't catch sight of anyone at any of them. Driven to frenzy, he fell silent at last and stood in one place in order to rest. A few moments later the "cat's music" also ceased. It seemed that complete quiet had descended. It was already getting dark in the cell, so Yosko made his hammock and

pressed up against the window with his book. But he had barely read a few words, droning them under his nose, when the soldier, seeing him, ran up and stood at the window.

“Get away from the window, thief!” he shrieked at Yosko.

Yosko didn't even hear him the first time, he was so engrossed in the story about the heron and the fish which he was reading.

“Away from that window!” the soldier yelled still more loudly.

“What do you want from me?” Yosko answered. “I'm not in your way. Can't you see that I'm reading? It's already dark in the cell, so I climbed up a little to the light.”

“Get away or I'll shoot!” roared the soldier, and before Yosko could climb down from his rigging, a rifle shot rang out.

“Yoy!” cried Yosko and fell like a sheaf from his hammock to the bed, which stood directly below the window. His legs jerked convulsively, while his hands, in which he held the book, were pressed close to his chest. Blood spurted from between the pages of the book. The bullet had got him direct in the breast.

“What's the matter? Where did it hit you?” we both shouted, rushing up to Yosko. But he didn't reply, only his dark eyes glistened like two glowing coals, popping out horribly in his face, which was as pale as that of a corpse.

A clamour broke out simultaneously in the yard outside our window and in the corridor at our door. Outside, the military guard had run out at the sound of the shot, and inside the warden was looking with the jail guards for the cell into which the rifle had been fired. They ran into our cell.

“Aha, this is the one!” they shouted, seeing Yosko lying there. “Ha, thief, did you get what was coming to you?”

Yosko was still tossing about and groaning quietly, still pressing the book with both hands to his chest as though he wanted to stay his mortal wound with it.

“What was he doing?” the warden asked me.

“I . . . was . . . only . . . to the light . . .”

He wanted to say something more, but he had no more breath. With a last convulsive movement he tore his hands from his breast and showed the blood-stained primer to the warden.

“He was reading by the window,” I explained to the warden.

At that moment a messenger from the court came up, looking for the warden.

“Mr. Warden,” said he from the corridor, “which cell is Yosko Shtern in? I have an order here from the court that he’s to be released.”

But Yosko had already been released but a minute earlier.

The Plague

ЧУМА

## THE PLAGUE

In addition to national and social oppression, the Ukrainian people also suffered religious persecution. With the coming of the Jesuits to positions of influence in the Polish kingdom, a concerted drive was commenced to force the Ukrainians, who were of the Greek Orthodox (Pravoslavna) faith, into the fold of Roman Catholicism. The political aim of this pressure was not only to strive in this way to denationalize the Ukrainians and bind them to the Polish gentry and state, but also to use them as a stepping stone for the conquest by the western powers of "all the Russias."

With this end in view, in 1596 the rulers of Poland succeeded in coercing a synod of Ukrainian Orthodox church leaders to adopt the Unia, that is, to recognize the supremacy of the Pope. Knowing that they would be unable to force the population to adopt Roman Catholicism outright, the Uniate (Greek Catholic) church was permitted to conduct its services in Slavonic and in all ways retain the ancient Orthodox ritual. The Ukrainian people stubbornly resisted this measure and where they were finally compelled to accept it, as in Galicia, they nevertheless refused to go over to the Roman ritual and continued their connections with the Orthodox faith which remained in eastern Ukraine, in Bukovina and, of course, in Russia. In 1946 the Greek Catholic clergy of Galicia returned to the Orthodox faith and today Greek Catholic churches remain only outside of Ukraine.

In "The Plague," Ivan Franko shows the struggle between the Jesuits and those "old-fashioned" Greek Catholic clergy, who were close to the Ukrainian people, in reality a struggle between the representatives of Polish and German "drang nach Osten" forces on the one hand and the Ukrainian people, allied with their kindred folk in Russia, on the other.

RETURNING from the cloister dining-room, the prior of the Jesuit monastery in Ternopol, yawning lightly, was preparing to lie down for a nap after a good dinner. Since it was a hot summer day, he took off his cassock and boots. At that moment someone rapped on the door of his cell. The prior frowned, pulled a sour face, and waited a moment. It was only after a second knock that he said:

“Enter, please!”

Pater Gaudenty, a Convent member, entered with a low, exaggeratedly humble bow.

“What is it you want, frater?” the prior asked him sternly.

“I wanted to ask you, clarissime,” the pater began, stopping at the threshold, “to hear me out. I wanted to converse with you about some things . . .”

“Why? Has something important occurred?” the prior asked sharply.

“N-no,” the pater drawled, “nothing exceptional . . . no, God forbid! But I wanted to ask you to hear some of my thoughts and ideas . . .”

“Ah, your thoughts!” the prior spoke with a sarcastic tinge to his voice. “But couldn’t those thoughts and ideas of yours be postponed until a more appropriate time?”

“Of course, of course they can!” the pater quickly agreed. “Only, if you’ll pardon me, clarissime, I thought that the present time would be the most appropriate. There are no

class studies now, and apart from that, you will also soon be sending your regular monthly report to our most reverend father, the provincial superior.”

“Report!” the prior practically cried out, and he completely woke from the drowsiness into which he was beginning to be lulled by the pater’s quiet and monotonous speech, accompanied by the buzzing of large flies on the panes of the barred cell windows and the chirping of the sparrows among the branches, abundant with cherries, that hung down to the very window. “Report!” he repeated and glanced at the pater from under drawn brows. “What have you to do with my report?”

“God forbid!” pater Gaudenty excused himself hurriedly. “I know very well, clarissime, that the report is your business, and precisely because of that I venture to trouble you with my petition, that you take my thoughts and ideas and present them in your report to the father, the provincial superior, if you find them worthy and of some service, of course.”

But the prior, even though he didn’t take his watchful eyes off pater Gaudenty, was no longer listening to his insinuating, somewhat liquid and monotonous talk. A new thought struck him suddenly and it captured his entire attention. He knew that every pater had the right to secretly present “papers” to the provincial superior, that is, to carry tales about the other brothers, including him, the prior, himself. But affairs had been such that until recently the Ternopol monastery had been like a family and there had been no unpleasantness on account of informers. But this year, suddenly, there had come a change for the worse. Out of the blue sky two paters were transferred from Ternopol to a mountain cloister in Tyrol, which was considered a place of penal exile, and they were replaced by two others. From that time on it was as though a sack had been untied, pouring all sorts of censures, penances and other unpleasantness from Cracow on the unfortunate Ternopol monastery. The prior and all the paters couldn’t figure out who was doing that service to them. They suspected first one, then another

in their midst, especially since all felt guilty of more than one indulgence and neglect of monastery discipline.

Pater Gaudenty, somehow, was suspected least of all of being the author of that "nastiness." Firstly, because more than four years had passed from the time when he came to Ternopol and it was precisely those first years, when he was among the Ternopol Jesuits, that had been so peaceful and happy. Secondly, pater Gaudenty had the reputation among the rest of the brothers of being a prattler, or even somewhat simple. That reputation, naturally, could not have been much to the pater's liking, and yet he always sustained it in various guileless ways. It started and stuck to him mainly as the result of the vaunted "singlehanded missionary crusade" to Lublin gubernia to conduct Catholic propaganda among the Uniates there. This crusade had ended with the not very heroic flight of the pater from the territory of Russia where, like the ancient prophet Jonah, he spent only three days, and from which he had returned numb with fright and from a blow received from the butt of a rifle in the powerful hands of a border patrolman. The pater described this feat of his with truly comic tragism, and his story caused the whole fraternity to roar with laughter every time he told it. Pater Gaudenty himself, as though he didn't even notice the impression he was making, made faces and contorted his body as though he were reliving his tortures and, carried away with his tale, he would grow pale, shiver and sob in turn, which naturally sent his listeners into new paroxysms of laughter. At the same time the pater seemed so simple, frank and devoid of malice that it was difficult even to imagine that he could inform on his fellow monks.

But still, some vague prompting sent exactly this thought into the prior's head at the moment when the pater mentioned the monthly report. He recalled everything that he knew of pater Gaudenty's past. He was the son of a poor Mazur peasant. In 1847 the Tarnow bishop, Wojtarowicz, adopted him as his ward. After the bishop's death he studied in Cracow, then completed his studies in Rome, where he became a monk and entered the Order "named after Jesus."

The prior did not know what sort of a reputation Gaudenty had in Rome, he only knew that some years later the general of the Jesuit order, Bekks, himself sent him on that mission to Lublin gubernia, in which the pater achieved such brilliant "discomfiture." Only now, on thinking over all those circumstances, did the prior come to the conclusion, in a flash, that, recognizing the exceptional importance of the "position" of Catholicism in Lublin gubernia and in Russia generally, the leaders in Rome must assuredly have given deep consideration to who was to be entrusted with such a mission, and therefore they must have had some guarantee that the young monk would acquit himself well. But this meant that pater Gaudenty could not be such a dolt and so naive as he pretended. If that was so, everything suddenly became clear to the prior and pater Gaudenty grew in stature in his eyes, though he himself probably never noticed it. The entire conduct of the silly pater immediately took on a completely different meaning, achieving the dimension of a cleverly conceived and ably executed truly Jesuit intrigue. The prior, moreover, had long sensed that they were dissatisfied in Rome with the measures and activity undertaken by the Ternopol monastery, and that they expected something bigger of it, since it was their most eastern fortress. Unconsciously he felt that some sort of change was coming. And now, looking intently out of the corners of his eyes at pater Gaudenty, he guessed, not without cause, that here was the prophet or even the vanguard of that new orientation in the Order's activity, who could sweep him aside as he had swept away the fraters exiled to Tyrol.

Under the influence of these thoughts and conjectures, which flashed swiftly through his mind, the prior's countenance took on a somewhat perplexed expression and after a moment's silence he said, rapidly and jerkily:

"So, that's how it is! Thoughts and ideas . . . Well, that's not a bad thing! Of course, of course, we'll consider them and jot them down . . . Be seated, reverendissime, be seated, if you please, right there! I am at your service."

A slightly ironical smile flashed across pater Gaudenty's

face when, bowing low, he sat down on a plain wooden chair at the table, on the other side from where the prior was sitting.

“Well, reverendissime,” said the prior when they were both seated face to face. “what did you want to tell me your ideas about?”

“I have only one thought, clarissime, that which we all share: the welfare and growth of our holy Catholic Church,” replied pater Gaudenty. “You, clarissime, are aware better than I of the situation of our Church in this province, and particularly of our Order here, in the most eastern van of Catholicism, face to face, I would say, with the terrible enemy—Orthodoxy.”

“Aha, it’s clear I’m not mistaken,” the prior thought. “This is he, the prophet of reform, who was sent here to spy on us. This is the informer! Well, that’s fine. Now, at least, I know whom I’m dealing with.”

And turning to the pater he said, as though in perplexity:

“Pardon me, reverendissime, but I must confess that I don’t quite understand what you are leading up to.”

“I’ll have the honour of explaining that right away,” the pater replied hurriedly. “I humbly beg of you to hear me out. I only wanted to assure you that I never permitted a doubt to enter my mind about your deep sagacity, accurate knowledge and correct estimation of the situation in which we find ourselves. And if I presumed on my own initiative to gather certain information that has to do with the present situation, and to draw some conclusions from it, this in no sense was because of any distrust of your leadership, but rather because of a passionate devotion to our common sacred cause.”

The prior’s perplexity grew into impatience. He felt a certain loathing and hatred of this scraping hypocrite and informer who sat before him, but at the same time he could not deny that in this matter he was acting completely in the spirit of the rules of the Jesuit Order. But since in this instance the matter involved the prior personally, the man in him took precedence over the Jesuit. Guessing that before

him sat his secret enemy and informer, he decided to talk to him straight, without the usual philistinism. "I'm still the superior here," he thought, "and I must let him know this, come what may later!"

"You know, reverendissime," he spoke in a sharp and contemptuous tone, "you should speak to me simply and frankly. I was never in Rome, I have never studied diplomacy, and I was always of the opinion that diplomacy hid a great deal of insincerity. And moreover, I figure we're our own kind of people, so let us talk without unnecessary beating about the bush."

Pater Gaudenty again smiled ironically, as though pleased that he had so quickly broken down the old prior's patience and made him show his dislike of him so openly.

"As you wish, clarissime," he said in that same exaggeratedly humble voice. "My soul is innocent of any taint of insincerity, especially towards my superior, who to me should be second only to God."

"Get to the business, reverendissime, to the business!" the prior interrupted him.

"My business is the following," the pater continued with imperturbable calm. "You are aware, clarissime, to what aim and task our holy Order is dedicated in this province. The sacred word spoken by the most holy Pope Urban—'Orientem esse convertendum'—contains our entire programme. The way to achieve its realization should always and everywhere be the object of our constant and most earnest concern."

"And do you consider, then, that we are not paying enough attention to this task of ours?" asked the prior with unconcealed dissatisfaction.

"God forbid, clarissime, God forbid! I never thought that! And then, who is 'we'? That means I'm part of it, too . . . No, no, that's not what I was leading up to. Just listen! It probably is not a secret to you" (with these words an ironic tone again tinged his voice) "that in the eastern part of this province there live people who consider themselves to be of the same race as the people on the other side of the Zbruch

River. But the kernel of the matter is this: those people supposedly belong to the Catholic Church, yet at the same time they consider themselves members of the Greek, that is, the Orthodox Church. This . . . this duality of religious consciousness between two enemy camps—what do you think, clarissime, does it not necessarily give birth to certain doubts and fears?”

“So that’s what!” the prior practically cried out. “You consider the position of the Uniate Church to be dual and therefore ambiguous?”

“Yes, clarissime,” pater Gaudenty replied sternly. “Not only that, but I consider the very existence of this dual, neutral ground here on the border to be one of the foremost barriers to the spreading of our influence on the other side of the boundary line.”

“Hmmm . . . in any case, the idea is interesting,” the prior said coldly and semi-contemptuously through set teeth, “and I would like very much to know your proofs, the facts that led you to such a conclusion.”

“Oh, as to that, clarissime, I’m quite prepared,” the pater cried gaily. “Take their priests, for example! Of what benefit is it to us that they consider themselves Catholic priests when they live with wives? Where a person should be working for Catholicism, giving himself completely and without equivocation to the promotion of its interests, they listen to their wives and act as their family relations dictate!”

“All that is true, but these are all old matters that must have been discussed many times even before you thought of them,” the prior noted querulously. “What’s the use to talk if it isn’t within our power to change things? This matter has been decided and endorsed by the Synods and the Apostolic Throne.”

“We’ll come back to that later,” the pater replied with unruffled confidence. “But here is another circumstance. Does not the kind of upbringing given the younger generation of priests by those Greek Catholics seem foolish and unreligious to you? What sort of priest will he make, the young man who is to be consecrated to the cloth tomorrow, to par-

take of the greatest mystery of the Church, if today, instead of preparing for that sacred act with contrite spirit, he's making the rounds of the feasts, dancing the 'kozachok' and 'kolomeika', turning the heads of priests' daughters and thinking only about finding a bride with a rich dowry, so he can get rid of the debts he piled up in the seminary?"

The pater, evidently, was becoming inflamed and carried away by the current of his own thoughts. His speech, at first languid and saccharine, became lively and passionate, and the prior began to listen with greater attention.

"It's not fitting, that's true," he said, "but only it seems to me that we haven't the power to change it."

"It is only the words of Christ and the dogmas of the holy Catholic Church that cannot be changed by anyone," the pater spoke heatedly. "All other things are human decisions made at definite times to meet temporary needs. As conditions change, the needs also change, and new ones arise in their place—and that is why the decisions must be changed to suit new conditions and needs. You, clarissime, referred to former Bulls and Synods in which the position of the Uniate Church was defined. Do not forget that all this was two or three hundred years ago, when Poland, a powerful Catholic state, existed here, when Orthodoxy was on the downgrade, and the Catholic Church could make concessions to local traditions without injury to its own might and esteem. Now the situation is altered! Now both friends and foes are ready to consider any concession made by Catholicism to be proof of its actual weakness. Now, clarissime, when we have actually become weaker, we must at least pretend that we are strong by applying the kind of measures that are applied by the strong."

The prior listened to this fiery harangue with wide-open eyes. He had not expected such passion and such a broad view of the question from a common pater. There could be no doubt that a big-time agent was sitting before him.

"Well, suppose we agree that it's so," he agreed, "and that everything can be changed. Still it would be interesting to hear what you intend to do, and how?"

"Oh, it's only necessary to have a good knowledge of how the matter stands at present for the line of conduct to become clear of itself. We must clearly realize that the position of this so-called Unia is very shaky, that at the present time it's a tree without roots: it has departed from Orthodoxy, yet it hasn't come over to Catholicism. Now, tell me, can anything be more foolish than this demand for some kind of autonomy, for a people's church, which the Uniates are making? Why, the whole strength of the Catholic Church lies in the fact that it is monolithic and centralized, and that it always holds to the principle: he who isn't with us, is against us. Autonomy, neutrality in time of war—that's the same as treason. That's why we should first of all root all those yearnings for autonomy and confirm Catholicism without reservations, and only then will we have a powerful lever in our hands for further struggle with the east."

Pater Gaudenty paused to catch his breath. His forehead was spangled with beads of sweat and flecks of white foam appeared at the corners of his mouth. The prior sat silent, with an expression of deep thought on his full, glistening countenance. Finally he said:

"Well, reverendissime, your ideas are very interesting and I'll see to it, of course, that they are brought to the attention of those who should know about them. It even seems to me that the people themselves will not be opposed to such a project. I know the Uniate populace of this city fairly well and I see that they very readily come to Latin Mass in the Roman Catholic churches. I have often been to the Catholic pilgrimages in Milyatin, Kokhavin and Kalvaria, and I've seen for myself how the masses of Uniate people gather at those affairs. That's what leads me to think that the local people themselves prefer the Latin ritual, perhaps, over the Greek, and will not oppose the reforms you have probably planned."

"The facts you have mentioned, clarissime, are valuable and interesting in themselves," the pater replied, "but unfortunately, they're only one side of the coin. You point to the Latin pilgrimages in Kalvaria and Milyatin, so I'll point

to the Uniate pilgrimages at Hoshov and Zarvanitsya, where every year nearly the same numbers of people gather as they do at the ones you mention. This means, therefore, that here we have to do mainly not with rituals but with the fact, evidently, that the people like to go on pilgrimages without caring very much where or what kind of pilgrimages. But I'll bring yet another fact to your attention. Every year thousands of these Uniates tramp to Orthodox Pochayev, even though that's on the other side of the border, while the Catholic pilgrimages of the Dominican Fathers in neighboring Pidkamen, on this side of the border, right across from Pochayev, cannot reach such renown no matter what they do. There's a fact worth thinking about!"

"But, if you'll pardon me, reverendissime, how do you explain that?" asked the puzzled prior.

"That's exactly where the difficulty lies, for you can't explain this fact at all, actually, without admitting the thought that not only is the Unia hypocritical and should not be tolerated from political considerations at the present time, but also that it has proved completely incapable of bringing up the popular masses in a religious manner, having inculcated in them an indifference to the most basic religious verities, dual faith, or even the complete absence of all religious conviction."

"Come, that's an exaggeration!" the prior attempted to argue.

"No, clarissime," pater Gaudenty interrupted him, forgetting all respect for his superior's rank. "First hear me out, and don't pass judgment until later! Not long ago, returning from Pidkamen, I caught up with a group of those pilgrims not far from the village of Tovstokhlopi. I entered into conversation with them.

"'From where does God bring you?' I asked them.

"'Why, from the pilgrimage,' a man who was walking at the head of the pilgrims told me.

"'Where did you go for the pilgrimage?' I asked further.

"'Why, to Pochayev.'

"'To Pochayev? Well, and how did you like it there?'

“ ‘Why, and how should we like it? Fine,’ answered the man artlessly.

“ ‘Fine? Have fear of God!’ I couldn’t help exclaiming. ‘What is there so fine? Don’t you know that the divine service there is schismatic?’

“ ‘God knows,’ answered the man, scratching the back of his head, ‘if it’s schismatic or not schismatic. It’s not for us to judge. For us it’s enough to know that they praise God there as well. And we know another thing,’ he added and looked me over sarcastically, ‘that they charge less for confession there than in Pidkamen, and they have a fire in church there in winter to boot.’”

Finishing his tale, pater Gaudenty fell silent and sat for several moments for greater effect with his arms outspread, his mouth half-open and his eyes staring, as though transfixed with shock and anger.

“In your opinion, clarissime,” he asked, breaking the pause, “is not that a clear proof of the complete collapse of religious sentiment among the masses of the Uniate people? Why, you would think that the light of Christ’s faith had not yet touched those people!”

“Yes, that’s true,” the prior sadly confirmed. “It cannot be left that way. By the way, do you know where those people were from?”

“From Tovstokhlopi. I got that information right off.”

“Who is their priest there?”

“Chimchikevich.”

“Who’s that? Chimchikevich? Somehow I don’t recall hearing that name before this.”

“And no wonder, for there is a real antediluvian priest. He’s terribly old and hasn’t gone out of the village anywhere for some thirty years now. He’s a freak, not a priest. I dropped in to see him one time a year ago when I was passing through, and I became acquainted with him.”

“All right, we’ll talk about that later,” the prior interrupted him. “Now tell me what conclusions you have arrived at and what means you advise for the realization of your intentions?”

"I presume to suggest the following proposals for the approval of the superior bodies. First of all, to bring our influence to bear on the common people in the villages and towns, ridding them of the contamination of dual faith and systematically implanting the Catholic spirit in them."

"Fine, but by what means?" asked the prior.

"The usual means. We must systematically organize processions and missions in the villages and towns, especially along the border, with the greatest of ceremony and with appropriate sermons. And we must influence the literate in the cities and villages with the aid of publications that would be appropriate to this purpose, as is already being done by us with such success in the western part of Galicia."

"I am in complete agreement with you, reverendissime," said the prior, and he pressed the hated pater's hand. "All that is wisely conceived, and I believe your advice will receive the full approval of the authorities."

"Non mihi, clarissime," the pater replied humbly, "sed ad majorem gloriam nominis Jesu. As to the Uniate priesthood, we should divide it into two categories. There are foxy ones among them, who acknowledge union with Rome with their lips, but in their hearts they lean to Orthodoxy and under the guise of 'purifying the ritual' they are striving to push the Unia into Orthodox forms, taking it farther and farther away from the holy Roman Church. We must consider them our vicious enemies and deal with them as we do with an enemy in war. They must be watched continually and as soon as they provide the slightest excuse for it, they must be exposed to the authorities and before their own flock. The second category is composed of the antediluvians, men who are poor in spirit and naively good-natured. There are more of those, of course, and they must be won with kindness, we must mellow them down in all sorts of ways and slowly transform them into our tools . . . At the same time we must pay the utmost attention to see that the hierarchy is selected from among the supporters of our tendency and to rear the youth in our spirit, and especially we must make certain that the young generation of priests is ordained

only in celibacy. Along with that, it is self-evident that the Uniates must be strictly forbidden to go on Orthodox pilgrimages to Pochayev or even to Kiev."

The prior actually beamed with pleasure, the plan concocted by pater Gaudenty seemed so simple, logical and fine to him. All that Iosafat Kuntsevich, Veliamin Rutsky, Shepitsky, Rillo and other mergers of rites could not achieve—and they failed exactly because they merged the tops without going down to the roots, satisfying themselves with changing forms without changing the spirit of the masses—all this now seemed easy and near of attainment. Such a simple and seemingly natural line of development was shown in regards to it all that one only wondered why no one heretofore had stumbled on such true and clear clues. The Jesuit and the Pole rose simultaneously in the old prior's heart, for though he had served the Order many years now, yet he had preserved a spark of patriotism from the days of his youth in the shape of vague day-dreams of a great, powerful and strictly Catholic Poland, stretching from sea to sea. All that would be torn away from Orthodoxy and the Unia, in his opinion, would fall of itself into the lap of Catholicism and Poland. Unable to control his joy, the prior rushed to embrace pater Gaudenty.

"Oh, reverendissime! Having heard your plan, even I, who am old, have grown younger!" he exclaimed. "Truly, the scheme is worthy of very close attention indeed, and you may be sure that I'll bring all my labours and influence to bear that it should be carried out. But it seems to me that you yourself have correspondence with the authorities, have you not? . . ."

That question was thrown in so innocently, so mildly, and flowed so naturally from the relations that had arisen between them just a moment previously, that pater Gaudenty, intoxicated with his triumph and with the great impression his oratory had made on the prior, was not able on the spur of the moment to turn to falsehood.

"Well, yes," he said, "sometimes, in the line of duty, I have . . ."

The prior's small eyes glistened with malicious glee. Then, smiling good-naturedly and pressing the pater's hand, he hurriedly chimed in:

"Of course, of course! That's what I thought, that it was you who sometimes, in the line of duty, naturally, writes denunciations of our brethren! Well, reverendissime, that's commendable, even our articles command us to do it. No, no, don't look at me in such confusion! I'm not saying anything! To the contrary, I'm even very glad. You are such an able and experienced man and you'll inevitably go very far, and after all, that's the only way we have open! I will pass your schemes and plans on to the proper place, and you do me a favour in return, and don't forget me in your prayers and your . . . hahaha . . . reports!"

With these words, bowing politely and chattering without pause, the prior led the stunned and nonplussed pater Gaudenty out into the hallway and then locked the door to his cell in his very face.

## II.

A month had passed since the above conversation. Again pater Gaudenty was in the prior's cell, sitting across from the prior with humble and self-effacing mien, ready to hear why he had been summoned.

The pater's life had not been happy during that month. Nobody had so much as uttered a word of rebuke or shown the slightest sign of unfriendliness or anger, and yet his former comic role was abruptly ended, everybody turned away from him, and those who had previously revelled in listening to his tales and jokes now either passed him without a word or else spoke to him only when that was absolutely unavoidable. Whenever they encountered him, the faces of the brethren immediately became long, their lips pursed and their whole appearance became somehow sour and pious. This whole month had been one unending silentium for pater Gaudenty, the more irksome because the prior had not allowed him to go a step outside the monas-

tery walls, had not sent him, as had been his custom, to preach either in the city or in outside churches.

The pater endured this general unfriendliness toward him without flinching, but still you could see that it hurt him to the quick and that he regarded it as a great injustice. After all, he had done nothing unlawful! Who knows, maybe each one of the brethren was doing the same thing on the quiet! But there they were, chummily chatting while they walked the monastery grounds, laughing, joking, slapping each other on the back, picking ripe cherries together, while he was avoided as though he were contaminated.

"It's all that sybarite's intrigue, that lousy prior's," the pater ground his teeth with rage as he walked up and down his solitary cell. "But just you wait," he shouted and shook his fist at the wall, "my time will come! We'll settle accounts yet!"

Therefore it was no wonder that all the clouds of pater Gaudenty's wrath and hate gathered over the head of the prior and that every meeting with his "superior, next to God" was very hard to bear, all the harder because a deep sense of shame and a lowering of human dignity was added to the anger and the hatred.

The prior understood all this very well, but he also understood that once he had been uncovered as a spy, pater Gaudenty had become impotent against him, so he tried in every way to prolong the tortures of the hapless pater and make them more painful. Therefore he ordered him to sit across from himself in the dining room—this was the place of honour, where usually sat the member of the fraternity who of all men in the monastery was considered next to the prior. But the prior did not deign to say a single word to Gaudenty, while conversing with those who sat on either side of him, and never ceased to needle him with his piercing good-naturedly sarcastic glances. Under the prior's looks pater Gaudenty felt as though he were on fire in his place of honour—he immediately sensed that the prior wanted to shame him publicly, and therefore he sat without a word, hunched over, his face bent down, striving not to see anyone

or hear anything. He would not have ventured to speak to a neighbour for anything in the world, for he knew for certain that the latter would pretend not to have heard him and would turn away, while a quiet, biting, serpentine whisper would spread about the table. Thanks to this innocent slyness on the part of the devout prior, the joint meals became an incessant torture to pater Gaudenty; a spoonful of food refused to go down his gullet, he bit each piece of bread as though he were eating his own flesh, and he returned from dinner in a sweat, panting, broken up. During that month he had lost much weight, his eyes had sunk and his lips had paled and stretched even more than before.

But an extraordinary event took place: the prior had the pater called to see him in his cell. There is no use denying that the pater went in a not very pious frame of mind. The prior greeted him with his usual mocking-sarcastic look and lit into his talk without letting him say a single word:

“Ah yes, ah yes, reverendissime, what did I tell you! Be seated, please be seated, right there . . . It happened exactly as I told you it would. Here’s a letter from the provincial father, and it is very, actually very gracious to you! Of course, that’s not to be wondered at; you have fully earned such confidence on the part of our superiors!”

Saying this, the prior unfolded the provincial head’s letter and placed it on the table before him. Pater Gaudenty stretched a hand out to take the letter.

“No reverendissime, pardon me,” said the prior, laughing, and he covered the letter with his broad beefy palm, “but the letter is not addressed to you, as yet it is addressed to me. I’m only supposed to tell you its contents, namely, that your propositions have been favourably received and that you yourself are instructed to carry out the first one, that is, the establishment of missions and preaching sermons wherever and whenever it appears to you to be necessary. Of course, we are all obliged to assist you in this matter, but according to the plans from higher-up, the business must at first be conducted stealthily, without attracting attention, just the

way you know how," the prior could not refrain from pricking Gaudenty.

"The will of our superiors is the will of God," the pater said modestly and humbly, "and I am prepared to get to business right away."

"Now, that's splendid!" said the prior. "But tell me, in that case, what your plan is and what assistance we should offer you."

"I would like to conduct a mission in that same village of Tovstokhlopi, which I had occasion to mention in my conversation with you."

"Umhuh, I remember!" the prior confirmed. "You even named the local priest—some queer name . . ."

"Chimchikevich," the prior replied.

"Umhuh, umhuh, Chimchikevich. What sort of phenomenon is he?"

"A very interesting phenomenon," the pater answered, "and it is because of that very phenomenon that I must go to Tovstokhlopi to launch my missionary activity. Just think: a gaffer of eighty, a queer character, practically no education, no understanding at all of the dogmas of the faith—in a word, an antediluvian phenomenon. And at the same time he's an awfully goodhearted oldster, naive and trusting as a child. So, on the one hand, missionary work is needed very much in Tovstokhlopi, and on the other, that's exactly where it will be easiest to start, because Chimchikevich is less able than anyone else to offer any kind of resistance."

"Well, that's fine! God give you help! But why do you think that missionary work is needed more in Tovstokhlopi than anywhere else?"

"Just consider, clarissime, that this antediluvian person has been living there fifty years, and what education does he provide for his flock? Just consider that he preaches only twice or three times a year; and what sermons! It's a comedy, no less! The neighbouring priests repeated them to me verbatim, because those sermons have become proverbial among them. 'Children, today Jesus Christ was born in Beth-

lehem, a Jewish town, in a poor and squalid stable. Exactly! And I would advise you not to get into a wrangle with the tax commissioner, because what will you gain from it? Huh? His is the hand and his is the power. That's what. God's blessing on you a-a-a-all! . . .' Here's another sample: 'My dear children, today Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and tomorrow will be patron saint's day. Now remember, don't any one of you dare to get drunk or to raise any rumpus. Heaven forbid! Strangers will be gathered there, and what sort of reputation would our community have, eh? . . . And the commons, don't you think it's high time you got together and figured out what to do about it? . . . I hear that a Jew is making up to you, wants to lease it or something . . . Eh, elder? Remember, if you dare let a Jew into the village, I won't even want to see you any more! I won't even want to hear of you any more, let alone what! This we utter unto you with all our soul and all our thought! . . .'

The prior guffawed unrestrainedly.

"Oh, you're killing me, reverendissime! Hahaha! Stop, for the Lord's sake! Can it really be possible?"

"That's the absolute truth, clarissime. But what more do you want, it's enough to look at the way he lives to be convinced that you may expect even worse things from him. He lives in a squalid peasant shanty, which is old and leans to one side; he lives completely alone, except for an old servant woman Feska, who is deaf in one ear, and an ancient servant Prokop, who is blind in one eye. Once on a time the community had built Chimchikevich a fine residence on the main street, just across from the church, out of their own funds; at first he wouldn't move over to the new house for anything; when at last they made him do it, he lived in it less than a fortnight, walking about the spacious rooms as though in a daze, continually complaining that there was too much room for him here, as though he were out in the steppe. So finally he went and at night he moved back into his 'lair' and he went and stocked grain in that new spacious parsonage as though it were a barn. You can imagine what a scandal there was in the village and in the whole district

when unruly sheaves began to stick out of all the windows of the new residence. Nothing in the world could bring the old codger to move back in there to live. The community, in order to avoid becoming a general laughing-stock, was compelled to thresh the priest's grain which was stored in that new residence as fast as they could, and then to turn that residence into a community meeting-place, library and granary, and to leave the priest in his old nest."

"Well, you've chosen a fine opponent, reverendissime!" said the prior, wiping away the tears that were rolling down his face from laughter with a silk handkerchief, but yet injecting a tone of sarcasm in his voice. "With such an opponent the battle will necessarily be brief and victory is assured."

"That's how it is, clarissime!" the pater replied gently. "When the rye is ripe, the stalks themselves bend to the sickle."

"Fine, fine, go with God's blessing to the harvest! When do you expect to leave?"

"I think there's no reason to waste time. I can deliver my first sermon in Tovstokhlopi next Sunday."

"Excellent. Today is Monday. I'll write your Chimchikovich today, to prepare everything that's needed for the mission, and you can set out directly after divine service on Saturday."

"As you will, clarissime!" replied the pater.

They both rose. The prior walked with the pater to the door and answered his bowing and scraping only with his usual goodnatured-jeering smile.

### III.

After early mass on Saturday pater Gaudenty climbed into the monastery carriage that had been prepared for him and he gayly drove out of town. The day was wonderfully fine. Wherever your eye lit on the fields sickles flashed, scythes strummed, songs, laughter and shouts of working folk rang out. Summer field work was on full speed under the burning rays of the sun.

After the suffocating monastery air pater Gaudenty took pleasure and revelled doubly in the broad, free expanse, the fresh, scented breeze that wandered down from the far-away pine forests of Brodi district, and the majestic even though monotonous Podilya landscape.

While the road to Tovstokhlopi was good, still it was some distance away. It was already past lunch time when the light, rubber-tired buggy, rumbling easily along the hard clay road, entered the small courtyard of the Tovstokhlopi parsonage.

"Ah, reverendissime!" exclaimed Father Chimchikevich from a shed, seeing pater Gaudenty from a distance as he climbed down from the carriage. "Ashes should be strewn at the feet of such rare guests! What storms, what rainclouds have driven you to our parts, huh?"

Pater Gaudenty did not reply, only smiled sweetly, came up to the old man with wide open arms and warmly embraced him.

"I beg you to come in! Don't spurn our home!" Chimchikevich invited him, hopping around the Jesuit. "Prokop, hey Prokop," he turned to his servant and comrade, "get some oats and hay for the horses and help to unharness them!"

"If you please, Father, maybe he'll drive away soon?" Prokop growled lazily, with an unfriendly glance at the uninvited guest out of his one good eye.

"Now, now, he will drive away, that's true," Chimchikevich replied, laughing goodnaturedly, "He didn't come to take over the parish, that's certain. But he won't be leaving soon, Prokop, not soon. We won't let him get away very soon. Hey, Feska, where are you, old one?"

"Here I am, dear Father! What do you want?"

"Fix us a bite to eat, granny. Understand?"

"Get the gander?" the deaf old lady asked, and Chimchikevich, not wishing to shout more loudly, began to explain to her on his fingers what it was he wanted.

"Now there's a true picture of this whole church," pater Gaudenty thought, as he examined and listened to every-

thing that went on about him, "the shepherd is senile, and his flock is half deaf and half blind!"

But now Father Chimchikevich, taking hold of him and pattering with his feet, began to lead the pater to his living-room, which simultaneously served him as bedroom, dining-room and office.

"Be seated, reverendissime! Be seated!" he begged, drawing up a plain wooden chair, while the Jesuit was examining his home. Truth to tell, there was not much to examine. The living-room was small, clean and simply furnished with wooden furniture; in the corner stood a wooden bed, covered with an old-fashioned bedspread of village make, but very beautifully made; at one side stood a desk, heaped high with parish registry books in strong leather binding, on which, contrary to the general village custom, not a bit of dust was to be seen; in the other corner stood a small bookcase with glass panes, and on the wall under an old-fashioned picture of Saint Nicholas there hung a round wreath of oats, as large as a waggon-wheel, with branches of scarlet guelder-rose plaited in it. In the middle of the living room stood a large, square oaken table, covered with a lace tablecloth, and in a wooden bowl on it lay freshly-cut golden-amber combs of honey, which filled the entire living-room with a strong honey aroma.

"It's as though I knew visitors were coming, my soul felt it!" Chimchikevich spoke gayly. "After lunch it was as though something inside urged me: go and bring some honey! And I have wonderful honey, reverendissime! Just be so kind and try a little of it!"

The pater still sat as though his mouth was full of water. He was somehow confused by the complete naivete and good nature of this old gaffer. But he couldn't resist the temptation of the aromatic honeycombs. Pulling his chair close to the table, he took a finely carved wooden spoon and slowly sucking out the honeycombs, he began a conversation with Chimchikevich. And of course, all the while Chimchikevich spoke only in his own tongue, Ukrainian, while the Jesuit

employed the most select Polish, careful not to sully his tongue with a Ukrainian word.

"Ah yes, dear Father," the Jesuit began with the appearance of sincere satisfaction, "there's no doubt about it, that's fine honey you have, fine! No wonder your apiary is famous throughout the county. You can see right off that the bee-keeper knows his vocation."

"Fifty years, reverendissime, fifty years now I'm keeping bees, so why shouldn't I know their nature and their habits?"

"Fifty years!" the pater exclaimed, as though Chimchikevich had told him some extraordinary news. "So that's how it is! So you're a priest for fifty years already?"

"Oh, no, I'm a priest for fifty-five years already," Father Chimchikevich replied simply. "Wait a bit! I was ordained at the time Napoleon was given a beating — at Waterloo or someplace! How long ago will that be? I think it was in 1815, wasn't it? That was a famous time, reverendissime. God forbid that I should live to see another like it!"

"Is that what you think?"

"Of course, nothing else. Well, and then for five years they moved me around the administrations. Oh, how I suffered then — the Lord preserve us! As they say, I was in fire and in shipwreck, I froze and was soaked . . . My late wife died in misery, too; and for us, reverendissime, our wife is the first and the last. And here I am, holding on in this place for fifty years now. Like that tree of God, wherever God plants it, there it grows so long as it's His holy will. Or what do you think, reverendissime, huh?"

"Your village is famous, too, there's no denying it," the Jesuit continued as though developing further the thread of his earlier thought. "It's a pleasure to the eyes to look on it when passing through. The fields are cultivated, the orchards, the gardens, the houses are new, the cattle is fat and sleek, everywhere one sees plenty and God's blessing . . ."

"Well, reverendissime, we work the best we can. 'In the sweat of thy brow, thou must get thy bread,' or however it is written in the book, what? And we do not forget others."

"I have heard so, reverend, I have," the Jesuit picked it

up. "The county administrator can't praise your community highly enough. 'Whether it's paying taxes or whatever, he says, they're always the first, in keeping order in the municipality, or taking care of the roads and bridges, with them it's always like God said it should be. And if there's need of a collection to help fire victims or people ruined by the floods or the poor—Tovstokhlopi give like gentlemen.'"

"Like people, reverendissime, like people, not like gentlemen! The gentlemen are not very generous when it comes to such things. And we do as Christ taught: give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and unto God what belongs to God. That's how, what?"

"Yes, it's like that," the pater hissed, slightly bending his head to the side. "I won't argue with you about what belongs to the people and what to God. In this regard your Tovstokhlopi can serve as the model for all other communities, and of course, the example was set by you, and no-one else. Everyone must acknowledge that. But as to the things that belong to God, the spiritual side . . ."

The pater did not finish his sentence, as though he refrained from pursuing such a painful subject. But Chimchikevich evidently did not suspect that there was anything painful in it, for he asked straight out:

"Well, and have you something to rebuke me with from that point of view? Speak out, speak, I'll gladly hear you out."

"No, no rebuke!" the pater replied at once, as though touched to the quick. "What right would I have to rebuke you about anything? God forbid! I only . . . well . . . for example, take this! The district school inspector just can't get over it. 'How strange it is,' he says 'that the village is rich, decent, solicitous, and here five years now I keep troubling them, begging them and trying to convince them, and yet no matter what I do, I can't get them to establish a school in the village.'"

"So that's it!" Father Chimchikevich exclaimed in a lively voice. "So the inspector has been complaining to you! Perhaps he has sent you here to convince us to open a school here? . . ."

"No, no, reverend, nothing of the kind! I'm completely unfit for such service!"

"That's what I thought," said Father Chimchikevich, calming down. "And as to the inspector, I wouldn't speak an evil word of him, he is a fool and that's all. He was told once that so long as he's the inspector here, so long we won't have a school, so why does he keep making trouble? I myself told him this quite clearly."

"You told him that? Now, that's interesting!"

"No, reverendissime, there's nothing interesting about it. Our people took a dislike to the inspector and they don't want him as the chief over our school. Why they do not, that's their own business. 'We got information from the neighboring villages, they say, how he treats the teachers and how he orders them to treat the children, and we can see that we would not tolerate that in our village. So it's better that we shouldn't have a school at all, than that we should be continually fighting with the inspector and being punished God knows for what!'"

Pater Gaudenty spread his arms wide with amazement.

"Well, I am compelled to tell you that that's completely wrong. Those are just plain peasant excuses! Just imagine what things would come to if every official would have to win his subjects' approval! Really, that's too much! And what have you to say about it, Father? Did you actually remain silent? I think that it was your duty to explain to them that their stand was, if you'll pardon me, foolish and baseless. Why, by their action, on account of their whim, they are depriving the entire rising generation of an education!"

"Well, reverendissime, I couldn't have told them that with my hand on my heart."

"You couldn't? Why is that?"

"First of all, because they're right, and the inspector is there for the people and not the people for the inspector. Secondly, this did not deprive anyone of an education, because all the people in our village are educated, all the

children can read and write much better than in those neighboring villages where there are schools.”

“All the children can read and write!” the pater cried out in real alarm. “And there’s no school in the village? How did this happen?”

“It’s simple. Every father and mother teach their children themselves.”

“And how did they learn?”

“I taught them. For thirty years now I’ve had the rule that I won’t marry an illiterate man and an illiterate maid from this village.”

Pater Gaudenty looked on Father Chimchikevich with staring eyes as though he were some trans-oceanic monster. And the trans-oceanic monster also kept glancing foolishly-naively at the pater as though it couldn’t understand what was so strange about it.

After a few minutes of silence, Father Chimchikevich dragged a low stool from under the table, brought a basket from the hallway filled to overflowing with cabbage leaves and sat down on the stool. In that instant, as though at a signal, dozens of rabbits tore into the living-room through the partially opened door to a neighboring pantry, and happily hopping, they converged on their master. Together with them a current of an unpleasant animal odour came into the living-room, but Father Chimchikevich didn’t notice it. The rabbits covered the old man like a mass of light varicoloured moss. Some of them leaped onto his knees, others on his shoulders, his head and his hands, while the others rushed to the basket and began to chew the fresh leaves, moving their long ears and staring at the strange guest out of dozens of round eyes.

“Away with you!” Father Chimchikevich cried gently, shaking himself free of his soft-furred pets and strewing the cabbage-leaves on the floor for them. The rabbits jumped off his knees and shoulders all together and ran to feed, while several stopped in front of their master, stood up on their hind paws and looked straight in his eyes, as though begging him not to chase them away from him.

"You see, reverendissime," Father Chimchikevich broke the silence with a smile, "they're dumb creatures, as the saying is, and yet they can be taught something and acquire habits. It's only necessary for a man to pay attention to everything he does, to put his soul into the business, and then his work will have a soul, it will live. That's how! But he, who does not put his soul into the work, he'll never find it; don't you think so?"

It is not clear whether it was the smell of the rabbits, or that continually repeated question, or maybe the suspicion that was aroused in the pater's soul that Chimchikevich was not as foolish as he seemed, or finally, all this together that brought the pater to a tizzy of nervous irritation. He was strangely disturbed and decided to finish this conversation right there and then and to come straight to the point of the matter.

"I am in complete agreement with you, Father," he said in an entirely different voice, stern and full of reproach. "Wherever the pastor does not impart true piety to his flock, there is no use looking for it."

At these words Father Chimchikevich sprang from the chair as though he had been bitten by a snake.

"This . . . this . . . this . . . how's that, reverendissime?" he asked in a trembling voice, as though something was boiling and lumping up inside of him, "Are you saying that against me?"

"Neither for, nor against, just in general," the Jesuit answered evasively.

"Meaning, that is, that I'm an old fool, fooling around with bees and rabbits and not teaching my parishioners piety, eh?"

"Please, Father! Who says that?" the Jesuit cried.

"I know who says it, reverendissime, I know! You yourself just said it too! Well, maybe it's really so! Maybe I'm really a fool and not fit for anything! Why, for twenty years now already all sorts of good friends keep writing reports about me to the consistory, saying I'm an ignoramus, that I'm use-

less, that I don't preach any sermons in the church and that I do God knows what else. And all this 'with good intentions,' as it's said. Only, of course, not one of them even gave a thought how it was for me, an old man, to listen to such accusations. Please, have some pity on me, too. You can see that I have one foot in the grave already, and that if not today, then tomorrow I'll be squaring my accounts with God! Let me die in peace! Don't poison the few final moments that are left to me! Am I to blame that the Lord seems to have forgotten about me and doesn't take me to Him?"

The old man's voice broke down from excitement and two huge tears rolled down his withered, wrinkled cheeks. The Jesuit sat silent, his eyes downcast, and he tried not to look at Father Chimchikevich.

"I know very well," Chimchikevich resumed a little more calmly, "that pastors are now expected to know more and be able to do more, but I'm already too old to learn. Take the holy dogmas, for example! Even in the seminary I didn't know much about them; and the way they taught us there at that time! Later I forgot everything I had learned. So how can I preach my peasants a sermon? If I started talking about the dogmas, I'm afraid that I'd be liable to spout some heresies yet. If I did, then for sure there would be so many complaints and reports sent in about me that I'd never wash myself clean of them. I will confess to you that to read from the pulpit what others have written and published is distasteful to me and my eyes don't serve me: and then there's always the rub that I don't understand them so very well either. And just to speak what comes to the tongue, well it's shameful and my conscience won't permit me. I know that I'm not a clever speaker. My parishioners fall asleep, honest to God, they fall asleep whenever I start to talk about things that aren't directly connected with their lives. I haven't the gift to talk flowingly and logically about things that aren't closely connected with them. Now tell me, reverendissime, what am I to do? Give me your counsel! Shall I bring down the wrath of God upon me by using His sacred name in

vain? I'd rather keep quiet and bring down the wrath of the consistory upon me."

"Of course," the pater agreed, "it's a greater sin to anger God than to anger the consistory. But how can you anger God if every Sunday you teach your parishioners the sacred faith and the Christian life?"

"Here's how I will anger Him: during my sermon everybody will fall asleep and I'll weave a lot of heresies to boot, that's what! I know myself well and I don't strive for what God has not given me. And to pretend, to act slyly, to teach people what I don't myself know — I'm too old for that, reverendissime, and my conscience won't let me."

"My God!" pater Gaudenty spoke up. "Does that mean that your parishioners live like that, without learning the holy faith?"

"That's how they live," Father Chimchikevich replied, hanging his head on his chest. "Of course, they all read and know the catechism by heart, but they don't know any more than that, because I myself don't know any more, and I don't even understand everything in the catechism, so I can't explain it all to them. Well, what's to be done, reverendissime, if I don't understand? I tried to read theological books . . . But no go . . . Whether it's because of my weak eyes or my dulled memory, anyway I don't understand a thing. And here people come up sometimes and they ask: what is this and how are we to understand that? What can I tell them? Should I start lying, since I do not know for certain myself? So I tell them most often: 'My dear children! Understand it any way you want to, or don't understand it at all, it will be all the same to God. He Himself has said, it's not for you to fathom the seasons and the years. So leave it at that! See that you live in godly fashion and the rest will come out somehow.'"

Pater Gaudenty even slapped his knees in irritation.

"Have fear of God, reverend! Do you really say that to them?"

"Of course! I say what my conscience dictates."

"But what of the honour of the Church, which has been

given the authority to teach and to point out the ways of the Lord?"

"Well, reverendissime," Chimchikevich spoke practically with tears in his eyes, "it looks as though the Lord God did not want to grant me that honour, and since He hasn't given me it, where am I to get it, eh?"

"In that case you should leave this place, for which you feel inadequate. Your conscience should trouble you night and day for that sin, that you are occupying such an important position, but aren't performing the duties that go with it. Why, in this way you are leading your spiritual flock to the terrible abyss of atheism, barbarism and savagery! For what is man without faith, if not a beast? Your own conscience should tell you that!"

"What am I to do, reverendissime, if my conscience doesn't tell me anything of the kind?"

"Why doesn't it? Why not?"

"Because my parishioners are very far from atheism, wild fanaticism, or what was that strange name you gave it, reverendissime, eh? . . . much farther from it than the parishioners of other churches who sleep for two hours every Sunday through the sermon. I don't preach, but I teach them, simply, in conversations about home matters that are of interest to everyone. I understand this and so do they. 'Don't steal, don't drink, don't curse, don't fight, help another when he's in trouble' . . . Will you believe me, reverendissime, that during the past ten years not one person from our village has been in jail? For thirty years now we don't have a single Jew here. We don't have a school, but what a reading-room we have! It's true that this appears funny, but what of it? Whoever thinks it funny, let him laugh!"

"All that's very fine," the pater agreed, "but it's not enough."

"Of course it's not enough," Father Chimchikevich said in a lively manner, eyeing the Jesuit with a sly smile. "Have you driven through our village, reverendissime? Have you seen what it looks like? Just like one big orchard with

houses scattered in it here and there. And in addition it is fenced from both sides with a whole forest of fruit trees! What? Maybe I'm lying? . . . And do you know, reverendissime, how that forest is named? . . . Penance Wood, that's how. Why? It was barren grazing land when I came here, Yes! That's how it was called: Not-in-use. And then at confession, instead of the usual penance: the Lord's Prayer five times, "Virgin Mary" five times and "I Believe" once, I began to give each one of them such penances as to plant a fruit tree at first by his house, and later on that barren land, and if the sins were heavy, then several fruit trees. Well, in fifty years a forest has grown up and the whole village is covered with trees wherever there was space to plant them. The villagers have set up a treasury from the proceeds of the Penance fruit, and just out of the interest on the money they pay all the taxes—national, county, local and school taxes, and I won't even mention what goes to help the poor and the needy. What do you think, reverendissime, does such penance meet with God's favour, or no?"

"Do not blaspheme, Father!" the pater snapped sharply. "Who can know what meets God's favour and what doesn't! Who can plumb the depths of the mysterious ways of God? But insofar as my weak brain can judge, I tell you boldly: it is not favourable in His eyes and it cannot be!"

"Not favourable? Why is that?" Father Chimchikevich asked with undisguised wonderment.

"Because God demands a contrite and humble heart in doing penance, and what do you give Him? Furthermore, God demands that man should tear himself away as much as possible from all earthly things, from worldly vanities, but do not you with all your labours tie them down to earthly things instead? No, Father, your way is the way of error! God cannot bless such workings. To the contrary, God has even now raised His hand over you and sends you the harbingers of His wrath, and woe unto you if you do not repent in time and return to the path of truth!"

With these words the pater rose involuntarily and stretched out his right arm. His face shone, his eyes glittered, the

sternness of an angered judge lined his forehead and his lips.

"Harbingers? What harbingers?" Father Chimchikevich asked, trembling and turning pale.

"That's where the misfortune lies, that you don't recognize them! He has sent you the most terrible spiritual contagion: spiritual blindness, double-faith and indifference!"

"Double-faith and indifference? How do you mean that?"

"Very simply. Your flock cannot distinguish good from evil, Christ from Belial, the holy Catholic faith from the schism. Your spiritual sheep travel amiably across the border to Orthodox services. Isn't that something?"

"Oh, that's what you are getting at!" said Chimchikevich, breathing more easily and with a lighter heart. "Well, that's not such a terrible sin, it seems."

"Not a terrible sin!" the pater practically shouted.

"I don't think so. After all, they praise the same God, and they even do it the same way we do."

"The same God!" the pater waxed angry. "Then the Turks also praise the same God. So I suppose you would let your parishioners go to Turk services?"

"Well, now, reverendissime, that's going too far. I let them go to Latin services, only they themselves aren't very eager to go there, because they don't understand anything. But the Orthodox services are the same as ours. As to the dogmatic niceties that divide us, I don't understand them and neither do my peasants."

"Oh, Father, Father!" pater Gaudenty said sorrowfully, wagging his head. "And you can say that! You, a Catholic priest, can speak like that and even act like it!"

"What of it, reverendissime? One sings the notes he knows! Am I to blame that I speak and act only the way I know how?"

"That means that you must increase your knowledge, or else . . ."

"Or else what?"

"Or else find someone who will help you."

"And . . . who would help me?" Chimchikevich enquired naively.

"Is that such a big thing? I'm prepared to do it myself."

"You, reverendissime? In what way?"

"I can undertake to preach a sermon in your church not only tomorrow, but even every Sunday."

"How's that, tomorrow? Not only tomorrow?" Chimchikevich asked in a puzzled voice.

"But of course! Why, that's why I came here," replied the pater, in his turn puzzled by Chimchikevich's puzzlement.

"Why did you come?"

"To preach in your church tomorrow. You were informed of that, were you not?"

"If God save me! I was informed?"

"Of course! Our prior, in Ternopol, that is, was to write you about it!"

"Your prior! In the name of the father and the son! . . . But I do not know your prior!"

"How's that? Didn't he write you? Didn't you receive a letter?"

"I got some kind of letter this week," Chimchikevich replied in confusion, "but I didn't know who it was from or what it was about."

"Why didn't you know?"

"I didn't know, that's all! See, here it is! I took all kinds of pains to try to decipher it: it seemed that I could make out some of the letters, but not a single word! There's no use denying it, I spat on it and put it away. Here it is, take a look, is it from your prior?"

And Father Chimchikevich handed the pater the prior's crumpled and soiled letter. The latter glanced at it, not knowing what to make of all this, and then he groaned: the letter was written in Latin, which Chimchikevich had managed to forget completely fifty years and more ago.

"So that's what was the matter!" he pater said after a moment's silence, during which he managed in his heart to damn the sly prior for playing him such a trick. "What will we do now?"

"I don't know, reverendissime."

"At all costs I must preach in your church tomorrow. My authorities have ordered me to."

"Well," Chimchikevich answered quietly, "go to it with God's help, reverendissime. Only what will my authorities say to me about that?"

"Your authorities? How's that?"

"Well, the metropolitan and consistory. Or maybe you have their permission?"

"No. But isn't that your responsibility?"

"Of course not. Without permission from above I cannot permit a priest of a different ritual to preach in my church."

Pater Gaudenty stood as though rooted to the spot. Here was a do! On account of such a foolish formality his whole mission faced failure! Ah, must bagatelles, the petty things of life to which he paid no attention and which sometimes can spoil the whole business, must they always dog his steps? But no, it can't be, not in this case, at least! He began to walk the floor in nervous excitement. Suddenly he confronted Chimchikevich.

"So you say that you have no power to permit me to preach in your church?"

"I haven't, reverendissime."

"But can I preach beside the church, in the church-yard?"

"Yes, there you may."

"Well, that's fine. I'll preach in the church-yard."

"Good. Only you know, reverendissime, I'm an old, weak man. I'm afraid I may get in trouble over that."

"Who would make trouble for you?"

"The county administrator, for instance. You know, the church-yard, after all, is a public place and a sermon is, after all, a speech. Our official is a strict man, he takes his duties seriously. He'll come dashing up here and ask: 'What's this, Father, some kind of meetings are being held in your village in a public place and speeches are being made without the permission of the authorities?' And what will I say to that?"

"Just laugh it off, Father!"

"Well, you may laugh, reverendissime, and may it give

you health! But I am getting goose-pimples. Why should I look for trouble when I have none? Do you know what it would be better to do? You have good horses and a light buggy, the road is good now: why don't you, pardon the suggestion, drive to the city and get official permission? I will gladly do everything that depends on me. Take that trouble, reverendissime, it will be for the glory of God, and I, old man that I am, will rest easier."

At first pater Gaudenty had intended to argue and convince Chimchikevich that his fears were groundless, but the barely perceptible ironic note in the priest's final words struck him like a bolt of lightning. He immediately perceived that he had under-rated this oldster and that behind that childish simplicity and naivete of his there was hidden something that was deeper, an out-of-the-ordinary "something on the mind." Without uttering another word, red-faced and angry, the pater grabbed his hat and rushed out on the porch.

"Harness up!" he shouted with all his might, noticing that the sun had already begun to sink and recalling that the city was a **good two miles** away.

"That damned priest!" he muttered, while waiting for his carriage to be brought. "He has worn me out completely! He appears to be as dumb as a log and yet he's as taut as bast. But I'm a smart one, too, to waste so much time for nothing! The devil take him with that permit! He managed to think something up, all right! How will I manage to get it today?"

"Aha, Father, if you please, how about it? Didn't I say that he would leave soon?" Prokop said to Chimchikevich with a smile as he closed the gate after the guest's departure.

"That's so, Prokop," Father Chimchikevich said sadly, "he has left, but he'll be back, if not today, then tomorrow."

"God preserve us!" Prokop cried. "What does he want of us, Father, please?"

"What does he want?" Father Chimchikevich repeated. "What does he want, you ask? Well, listen, Prokop! You have known me a long time. What do you think: have I cared

for the people of this community? Have I taught them good? Have I set them a good example? Was I a good priest to you?"

"Only a scoundrel would say otherwise!" Prokop cried. "You have been not a priest, but a true father to us! That's what you've been!"

"Don't talk like that, Prokop! I know my faults. But I never knew and never imagined to this very day the things that Jesuit said to me."

"So that's a Jesuit? What did he say to you?"

"He said that my parishioners don't know God, but worship two gods, because they go to church both here and at Pochayev, and they say that the God in Pochayev is different than ours. D'you hear, old fellow. And on that account he threatened us with divine punishment."

"So that's what he croaked about! May the crows croak over his carcass!"

"Do not curse, Prokop! He said we must therefore all be enlightened and converted to the true Jesuit faith, and that he would do it."

"He? He should live that long! How is he going to go about converting us?"

"He will preach to us every Sunday."

"Is that all? Well, we've heard them preach before! That is nothing to get alarmed over! Let them talk. I thought maybe an order would come from the county, and the county would send the gendarmes in. Then we would really be in trouble, for they wouldn't convert us so much as they would skin us. But sermons—we-e-ll!"

And making a gesture with his hand, Prokop wandered off to the yard to his work. But Father Chimchikevich still sat for a long time on the porch of his old house, in the shade of thickly winding, blossoming bean vines, thinking about the Jesuit's sudden visit, the conversation he had with him, and his strange plan.

"Oh, this is not a simple, accidental thing," he thought. "These Jesuits are sharpening their teeth not only for me, but it seems that they want to swallow me first. So what? It's

God's will! I begged the Lord to let me die in peace, but it seems that on account of my sins the Lord did not hear me, and it will probably come to this, that with my own eyes I will yet see, perhaps, the beginning of a new struggle, and maybe I'll lay down my old bones in that struggle yet. His will be done! But the struggle will be savage and terrible! And who will be the victor? A black cloud is rolling down on us from the west, a terrible invasion, armed with education, treachery, intrigue, protection and all sorts of clever tricks. And what will we put out in the field against it? A great epidemic is approaching, a terrible plague, which can wipe us from the face of the earth like water carries away sediment. How will we defend ourselves, what cure will we find for it?" . . .

And Father Chimchikevich picked up an old prayer-book in a wooden, cloth-wrapped binding, the prayers written in a large, fine hand on old, thick paper. This was the only valuable thing he possessed and it was worth more to him than anything on earth. The old man opened the book and began to read from it, slowly, loudly and clearly enunciating the words. The prayer calmed him down; the heavy sensation evoked by the Jesuit disappeared. Somehow, involuntarily, Chimchikevich's eyes wandered to the last pages of the prayer-book where he himself, on the basis of ancient notes, documents and old folks' stories, had written the more than 300-year-old chronicle of the village of Tovstokhlopi. One page of that chronicle especially caught his attention. Having read it, he chuckled quietly. A new idea had flashed through his mind. He read that page over again and once more he smiled.

## V

It was Sunday. A rare summer's day. Not a cloudlet could be seen in the sky. The ages-old lindens with their thick green foliage blanketed the old but well-kept church with its red dome, covered with tin, with a gilded cross on the very top. Beside the church the new copper roof of the small, squat belfry shone as though it was on fire. From the church

came the sound of the loud, drawn-out chant of the liturgy, which was heard throughout the village; inside the church all who were able to were singing: the men, women, boys and girls in a harmonious chorus. It seemed that this tremendous vocal tide was pushing out the walls of the old church and lifting it up. Pater Gaudenty, tall and dark, was standing to one side, beside the rood-loft, with a countenance that was neither pious, nor morose, waiting for the service to end. He had suffered much yesterday: he had arrived in town late in the evening and lodged in a foul Jewish inn. In the morning he had run around more than enough before he finally woke the official and got a permit from him to speak in a public place. But he had got his way, nevertheless, and had returned in time. At first he had been very worried that Father Chimchikevich would play him dirty and get done with the divine service early, so when he arrived he would find the doors shut and nobody in the church. But no. Father Chimchikevich had behaved himself loyally, and after mass had waited an hour for his arrival. This pacified the pater somewhat in regard to Chimchikevich, although even yet he was not able to forgive him the uneasiness he had caused him yesterday.

Now Father Chimchikevich began to read the Gospel in a quavering voice. The pater was afraid that he would now launch himself into a sermon, but no, the Father continued to conduct the services. Now the divine service was finished. After communion the pater walked out of the church. Near the belfry a huge square slab, about two cubits high, some old grave-stone, stood between two lindens. The pater stood on it, this would be his pulpit. He took his liturgical robe from a bundle and slipped it on over his soutane. Standing high on the stone with the shaven crown of his head shining in the sun—he had forgotten to bring his beret—he seemed to be as tall as a roadside pole and as menacing as an apparition. The sun was nearing mid-day and it burned unmercifully. Sparrows chirped in the shade of the lindens. A mass of large red bugs crawled about the graves and filled all the openings and shaded cracks in the wooden fence. There was

not a breath of wind to freshen the air. The leaves didn't move at all, as though they were petrified. The pater stood exactly on the spot where there was no shade during the middle of the day. The perspiration began to form in small, shiny beads on his forehead, cheeks and hands; he listened impatiently to the singing which continued to flow from the church. The benediction had already been read, when suddenly the pater almost cursed aloud in rage—from the church came the sounds of "Rejoice, Nicholas, great performer of miracles!"

"Has the priest gone mad, or what? Today he gets the notion to read the akafest!"

But his anger didn't avail him anything, he was compelled to wait to the end of the akafest. Meanwhile, Father Chimchikevich, as though on purpose, enunciated each word slowly, in drawn-out fashion, as if he guessed what torments pater Gaudenty was suffering! The akafest dragged along a good half-hour; and the pater's sufferings during that time on his stone pulpit in the sun-lit square can neither be written down with a pen, nor described in a tale. He would gladly have climbed down from the stone and gone to sit in the shade by the belfry, if it had not been for a group of children and older girls, who had come out of the "women's section" and stood beside the church, crossing themselves and looking at him at the same time.

It wouldn't do to climb down in front of them. The pater sent them to the devil a score of times, but that didn't help any. The small beads of perspiration had long since turned into streams that coursed quietly down his cheeks, back and chest. His shirt was completely wet and it stuck to his body. The blood poured into his face, his head was aflame, there was a humming in his ears and his throat was dry; the pater began to seriously be afraid that he would suffer a sunstroke or some other sudden illness.

Well, thank God! The akafest at long last came to an end also! He breathed more freely. But what is this? The singing had stopped in the church, but now something was being said. Can it be? Had Father Chinchikevich begun to preach

a sermon? The pater smiled ironically, recalling the stories about his sermons. "It probably won't last long," he thought, "and yet it's a pity that I'm not inside the church. It would be interesting to hear him!"

And really, it was worthwhile to hear that sermon.

"My children," spoke Father Chimchikevich, "I have just read in the ancient papers that exactly one hundred years ago today . . . yes, one hundred years to the day! — a terrible plague broke out in our village of Tovstokhlopi. Half the village died in one week. Three hundred and eighty souls died without confession and the holy sacrament. God preserve us all from anything like that, folks! So what do you think, my children, wouldn't it be proper for us to mark the centenary of such a great misfortune in some way?"

The people stood, crossed themselves piously and sighed from the bottom of their hearts.

"So listen to what I have in mind in this regard, children!" Father Chimchikevich continued. "Let us say mass, kneeling down, for all those dead souls, and then you select a dozen of the strongest lads, do you understand? And let them take turns right until nightfall ringing the bells without a pause. Let those sounds go to God on highest and let those departed of ours know that we haven't forgotten about them even after a hundred years. Let this be for the glory of God, that he should take pity on us and turn away from us all evil, all plagues, whether physical or spiritual. Amen."

After these words the wee church bells tinkled, then the thin bell in the church cupola chimed in, followed by the loud peals from the belfry. The people fell to their knees and the requiem began. The pater looked on in amazement, not knowing whether he should remain erect or also fall to his knees. Finally, he too knelt on his slab.

The requiem ended, the divine service was over, and yet the bells kept on pealing. Crossing themselves, the people began to leave the church; the girls in white blouses and varicoloured ribbons looking like a field of poppies; behind them the women in white, the greying peasants in drab overcoats; the children ran in bunches all over the cemetery.

The pater stood up on the stone, sprayed with sunshine, and crossed himself. The people gathered about him out of curiosity, while the bells kept ringing without a stop. The young men pushed into the belfry with malicious smiles, rattling with their heavy boots as they climbed the winding staircase, while those who were already up stuck their heads out of the windows and openings and looked down at the Jesuit with no less curiosity. Their laughter could be heard through the loud noise of the bells.

A still greater crowd of people gathered, and the pater, crossing himself once more, looked up at the belfry in surprise, as though asking with his eyes when the bells would stop ringing. But the bells kept on pealing with all their might, without a thought of stopping. And those bells in the Tovstokhlopi belfry are really good and loud! They say that they were smelted from former Cossack cannon that had been sunk in the marshes around here after some battle or other, and were later found by the peasants. Good, loud bells! When all seven ring at one time, if you're around the belfry you can't hear your own voice, and the echo is heard in seven neighbouring villages.

The pater crossed himself for the third time.

"In the name of the father and the son," he began in a loud voice, but—what was the use! The bells completely drowned out his voice.

"What's this, aren't they going to stop ringing?" he shouted with all his might to the crowd gathered about him.

"What? What did you say?" the people shouted back.

"Won't they stop ringing?" the pater roared.

"Yes, they'll stop."

"When?"

"Tonight."

"Why tonight? Why is that?"

"We are driving the plague away."

"What plague?"

"One hundred years ago! There was a plague! Three hundred souls without confession! For the souls of the dead! We're driving away the plague!" The pater made out such

fragmentary phrases from the confused shouts of the people. He immediately surmised that this was a new invention of Chimchikevich's. His eyes blazed with anger and he leaped down from the stone to the earth.

"I am to preach a sermon to you," he said benevolently to the people.

"Then preach!" voices were heard from the mass.

"How can I preach when the bells are ringing? Tell them to stop!"

"No, we can't!"

"But the county chief himself gave me permission to preach!"

"Then preach!"

More and more laughter could be heard in the crowd. The belfry was packed with youth, in whom every gesture and every word uttered by the pater evoked irrepressible laughter and joy. Meanwhile the bells continued to ring without a moment's rest. The pater realized that his efforts were useless, and that the angrier he got, the more ridiculous his position would become. So he came to the conclusion that it would be better to retreat at this time, in the hope of better achieving victory the next time. Sweetly smiling, he said:

"Well, toll away, toll away, and I'll come next Sunday instead. God be with you!"

But as he was climbing into the carriage which was waiting for him close by, behind the church hedge, he shook his closed fist in the direction of the parsonage and muttered viciously:

"Just you wait, you old schismatic, I'll teach you a lesson!"



Borislav Is Laughing

БОРИСЛАВ СМІЄТЬСЯ

## BORISLAV IS LAUGHING

“Borislav Is Laughing” is a lengthy novel which, together with “Boa-Constrictor” and a number of short stories, describes the development of the oil industry in the Borislav region — the rise and growth of both the oil barons and the oil workers. Franko made a close study of his subject. This was the first time the workers’ theme was dealt with in Ukrainian literature — and one of the first in world literature. Of “Borislav Is Laughing” Ivan Franko wrote:

“This was an attempt to show the native labour movement of the Borislav oil workers, which ended with the great Borislav fire in the autumn of 1873.” He started writing the book in 1880 and it was published in serial form in the magazine “Svit.” Franko wrote it in instalments, so in 1882, when the magazine folded up, he stopped writing and the novel was never completed.

We print here only those excerpts that show the development of labour ideas, organization and united action among the workers, leading to their first strike. In the book the developments among the employers are similarly traced, the strike is broken by trickery, and the Brethren then took the path of terrorism and set Borislav on fire (therefore Borislav was “laughing”).

Franko intended to finish the novel with Benedyo learning all about socialism in prison and coming out to organize the Borislav workers in line with the socialist labour movement, but he never managed to do it.

*SYNOPSIS: Benedyo Sinitsya, a young construction worker, is injured during the ceremonies attending the laying of the foundation stone for the palatial home which oil baron Leon Hammerschlag is having built in the town of Drohobich. When he recuperates, he can't get his job back, but Hammerschlag finally promises to employ him as a master bricklayer in the building of an oil factory in Borislav. Bidding farewell to his mother, Benedyo leaves for Borislav.*

IT WAS ON a Sunday that Benedyo embarked on his journey. In the church, which he passed on his way, the deacons were intoning, in bass tones, "Glory to God." Across from the church, under a brick wall, hordes of oil workers in shirts saturated with oil and ragged jackets, sat on the shabby Drohobich pavement, waiting for "Glory to God" to end, when they would move on to Borislav. Some crossed themselves and muttered the Lord's Prayer, others dozed in the hot sun, still others held cheap little loaves and green onions in their hands and ate, biting into the whole, unsliced bread. Benedyo did not linger by the church because, though it was not so very far from Drohobich to Borislav, and although he would not have to look for a job there as would most of these oil workers, he had heard that it was very difficult to find lodgings in Borislav, and he

wanted to live somewhere close to the factory site where he would be working; following the accident he suffered at the time of the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, he felt very weak in the legs and he knew he would not be able to plow any great distances through the Borislav mud which never dries up. That's why Benedyo was hurrying to Borislav, so he could find himself a room before masses of working folk came swarming in and took up every cranny. But he would have to rent a room for a longer period, by the month; it was harder to find such a room, because the greater part of all the rat-holes in Borislav were rented out by the night to people passing through—this brought bigger returns to the owners.

Benedyo was greatly amazed, on leaving the town, to see that as far as the highway stretched there were groups of oil workers, slowly plodding amid clouds of dust. They had not waited for "Glory to God" to end, but had hurried on in order to cop some kind of work. Each one carried bread in his soiled cloth bag; in some cases, green onions also peeked out of it. At first, Benedyo went past these groups and walked by himself. But later on, he became weary and bored with walking alone. The sun was broiling the earth, which was already baked dry and cracking. Although the end of May was nigh, the crops in the fields didn't give any indication of it. The oats, having come up already, withered for lack of rain and stayed close to the earth. The winter grain had lifted itself somewhat from the earth and then apparently had remained that way on the stump and would not form ears, although this was the time for it. Vegetables and potatoes had not even come up; the soil, dried out and crusted for several inches in depth, delivered no moisture to the planted seeds. Sadness seized a person to look at the fields. Only nettles and mustard weed, which had sprung up early and sunk their spindly roots deep, flourished and spread. Meanwhile, the sun kept beating down and broiling; the clouds, as though to tease the wretched tillers of the soil, would gather in the sky along towards evening and then, without letting drop a single splatter of rain, dispersed as

night fell. In the villages, through which the oil workers passed, they met people who were sad and black as the earth. The usual Sunday laughter and banter was not heard. The older farmers would look up at the sun and then down at the earth as though with reproach, and then would hang their hands in hopelessness and despair. Benedyo, completely covered with sweat and dust, brooding thoughts also weighing down his spirits, tramped moodily through those poor villages that were already starving before the harvest and were waiting for the still more terrible times to come.

"Lord, grant Thy favours to us Christian folk," the prayers of the villagers reached Benedyo's ears from nearly every home. It became unpleasant and boring for him to walk alone through that misery. He joined a group of oil workers.

"Whither is God taking you?" they asked Benedyo, after the customary salutations.

"The same as you," Benedyo replied.

"Oh, but you're not going into the wells?"

"No, I'm a bricklayer."

"Oh, is there some new construction going up?"

"Sure, I'm already hired. Hammerschlag is building a new factory."

"Well, thank God, there'll be some new work opening up," one oil worker said. "Maybe a man can get a berth there somehow."

"Isn't there work at the wells?" Benedyo asked.

"Well, why shouldn't there be," the oil worker answered and made a weary gesture with his hand, "but what good is that to us if they pay so little that you can't make a living. Look at the hosts of people going there, and what you see here is maybe only one percent. The period before the harvest is hard this year, and in addition, look at God's punishment! It's May and yet the heat is as bad as at harvest time, there's no rain, so do you think there won't be a famine? . . . Well, so what will the people do? Every one who still feels some strength in him is shoving this way so he can earn some money. As for the bosses, for them that's a

feast-day. There are more workers available now, so they cut the pay. And really, it's either work for what's offered you, or else there's ten waiting to take your job. And don't think there aren't! When you come out on the street in the morning and take a look: job-seekers are as thick as weeds. About half get hired, and the rest go home with empty hands or else somehow manage to scrounge around: they fetch some water here, chop some wood there, and so on, for a piece of bread or a spoonful of gruel. That's the troubles we're having in our Borislav."

All the oil workers in the group began talking. Their comrade's story about the troubles in Borislav affected them deeply. Each found something to add, and Benedyo was confronted with a terrible panorama of human suffering and oppression. He had long been accustomed to hear that the work in Borislav was dangerous, but that it paid very well. It is true that the wretched appearance of the oil workers who of a Sunday sat around the Drohobich church led him to the surmise that something must be wrong with that talk about good wages, but he had never before had an opportunity to learn how things actually were. Only now had the oil workers' stories suddenly disclosed the whole truth to him. The terrible, hopeless situation of such a tremendous number of people gave him such a jolt that he walked as though dazed from shock, and couldn't even think about anything else.

"Is this the truth? Can it be?" he asked himself. It's true that he, too, had seen poverty in his lifetime, had experienced need and hunger, oppression, indignity and unemployment. But no craftsman in town ever reached such depths and suffered such indignity as the oil workers described. They related horrible cases of death from starvation, suicide and robbery. From their tales Benedyo also saw something else to which he wasn't accustomed, and that was that when one worker was in trouble, the others didn't care about him at all, they didn't help him out, but left him to the vagaries of fate. The oil workers told how their sick comrades would be abandoned and would die, and the

worms would already begin their work when, many days later, the body of the oil worker who had died without a human helping hand would be found in some unfrequented spot. These stories made a frightful impression on Benedyo. He had grown up and been raised in the town. His father had been a bricklayer's helper, just as he was, so from early years he had grown into the ages-old ways of the craftsmen with their guild system, even if it wasn't perfect, with their endeavours to provide mutual assistance, even if they were weak, and with their stronger sense of the union of all who worked in one trade. During Benedyo's time, the guild system among the bricklayers in Drohobich was, it is true, coming close to its final demise. The guild masters had already looted the guild treasury, into which both the craftsmen and the helpers had for a long time paid dues equally, but which was under the control of the guildmasters alone, without supervision or accounting. So now there was no money for the upkeep of the "hospoda," that is, the hotel where the guild council gathered on appointed days and where helpers needing work and the masters made their applications, making it a sort of an employment office for the men. The masters stopped taking an interest in guild affairs and remained strict only about adhering to the turns in which each was obliged to carry the guild banner on ceremonial occasions. But instead of that old and putrefied connection, during Benedyo's time a new bond had arisen among the Drohobich bricklayers, though it was temporary and not very clearly defined. If any workman or helper took sick, the other workmen, helpers and some of the poorer masters made voluntary contributions and paid the sick man or his family a benefit every week for the duration of his illness. They also gave assistance in the same way, only in smaller sums, to anyone who found himself without work, and at the same time they tried to find a job for him, either in his own trade or elsewhere. These beginnings of mutual aid were as yet weak, it is true, but they were maintained and were growing stronger. In time the situation was reached that when there was a needy case, not only some but all the

workmen paid in their full pledged share—something which couldn't have ben imagined previously.

Benedyo had grown up amid such town guild relations. When he finished his apprenticeship and became first a labourer, then a bricklayer's helper, he became vitally concerned with this new bond of labour solidarity that was arising . . .

All this was done by the Drohobich bricklayers in the dark, so to say. They had no communication with other workers in the bigger cities, except for the bricklayers in Strey and Sambir, who knew no more than they did. They didn't know a thing about the great growth of workers' solidarity and union in other countries, they didn't know that workingmen were banding together and organizing for a great struggle against entrenched wealth and against all injustice to the people, for better wages, for security for their wives and children, for their own old age, and for the widows and orphans. The Drohobich bricklayers also didn't know about the great growth of workers' ideals. All these things they didn't know, yet similar conditions and a similar period of history had brought about the vague emergence of those same ideals and efforts in their own midst.

In times of hardship, Benedyo had often pondered over the fate of the worker. Being sickly from birth, he was very sensitive to all pain, even when it was not his own, and to all injustice and wrongs. If a master berated a workman unjustly, if a paymaster paid out to a worker less than was coming to him, if a contractor fired a man from his job for no reason, or because of some word he had said—Benedyo felt as though someone were sticking a knife into his body. He would grow pale, bend over, his thin, longish face would become longer yet, and he would go on with his work, but you could see that he would rather be swallowed up by the earth than witness such things. It was at such moments that Benedyo pondered over the fate of the worker. Everyone could wrong him, he thought, and there was no redress. For example, a contractor had shoved a man from the place where he was working, berated him in the vilest terms, even beaten him

about the head, and sacked him from the job. But what if that man had turned around and given the contractor just one punch on the jaw? It would not have been long before he'd have seen the police. the courtroom and the jail. But these thoughts of Benedyo's always ended at the hard nut from which they started, at the old and hard nut of social inequality among men. And although he often repeated, as millions of our people repeat, that "things shouldn't be this way," those words didn't help him to solve the riddle of the cause of that inequality and whether it could be removed.

That's how it was now. Benedyo walked silently, listening to the stories of the oil workers about the wretched life in Borislav. "How is it," he thought, "that so many thousands of people suffer such slavery day after day, and yet thousands of others are clamouring to partake of such a bitter feast? They're just spoiling it for themselves. Over there, in the villages, it's still worse, it's true, because even if nobody treats them so cruelly or skins them so badly, there's the famine. Lord, how can you help such myriads of people? Nobody can help them."

"And how about you," Benedyo suddenly asked the oil workers, "haven't you tried to find a way to help yourselves?"

"What kind of way can there be?" an oil worker asked artlessly. "There's no help for it at all."

Benedyo's head drooped. The oil worker had stated decisively and with the greatest assurance exactly what he himself had concluded. So it must remain, then. But maybe there is a way, and they're either blind and cannot see it, or lazy and aren't searching for it, or else they would discover it and see it.

"Well, have you tried taking up collections among yourselves to help each other in trouble and sickness?" Benedyo asked.

The oil workers guffawed.

"How many contributions would it take to help all the needy! Everybody's needy there."

“Yes, but some are worse off than others. You could still help out the more needy ones, the sick and the unemployed. That’s how we, the bricklayers, do it in our town.”

“Eh, it’s one thing there, and another thing here. The people here are a conglomeration from all over the earth.”

“Do you think it’s different with us?”

“Well, but still you’re able to do things which we will never be able to do.”

The oil workers didn’t know their own strength and had no faith in it.

Again Benedyo fell silent and began to ponder over their words.

“No,” he came to the conclusion, “even from this it can be seen that there must be a way out of that misery, but some of them are blind and they won’t find it, and the others are lazy and they won’t look for it!”

Meanwhile, the pedestrians had left the highway and had turned onto a pathway that led to Borislav across a creek and a hill. On wading across the stream and reaching its high, winding bank by pushing through thick bushes of wild roses and hazelnut groves, they found themselves on the hilltop. Borislav lay before them as on a platter. Squat, shingled houses shone in the sun like silver. Here and there above the buildings rose thin, tall, red chimneys of the oil works, like scarlet ribbons raised to the sky. On a hill far away, on the other side of Borislav, stood a little old church, surrounded by linden trees, and around it still huddled the remains of the former village.

Although Benedyo had been in Borislav before, it had always been for brief periods of time. He didn’t know his way about. That’s why he told the oil workers where he would be working and asked them to show him where that was. The oil workers immediately figured out the spot and pointed it out to Benedyo. It proved to be quite a large plain, situated not far from where they were standing, on the outskirts of Borislav, a little to the left of the highway. There weren’t many houses in the vicinity, so Benedyo, having said good-bye to the oil workers, decided to go home

to house and ask for lodgings. But the owners of the first houses to which he came didn't want to rent him a room for a longer period. Those houses were built low and very broad—evidently there were many crannies under their roofs to accommodate oil workers, while their convenient location on the outskirts of Borislav gave them a grand opportunity of catering to both new and late arrivals.

Benedyo enquired at five or six houses without any result. Then he found himself on the street before a tiny old house, and he stood irresolute whether to go in and ask for a room, or to pass this shanty and go on.

The house was shingled, like the others, but the old shingles had begun to rot and were covered with green moss. Two tiny windows faced the street, barely above the ground; mud from the high embankment of the street oozed down towards them, dirtying the wall ever more and practically reaching the window-frames. The front of this house was bare, as were the others: not a garden, nor a lawn, as one finds in other places. It was a minute before Benedyo decided that he wouldn't pass this house by.

The door squeaked and Benedyo entered, first a narrow, dark hallway, and then a whitewashed living room. He was surprised to find there an old oil worker and a young woman. Benedyo greeted them and asked whether they would take him on as a steady roomer. The oil worker and the woman glanced at each other and were silent a moment. Then the man spoke:

"Humph, how should I know? There's the woman; it's her house, let her decide."

"Go on with you!" the woman exclaimed sharply. "How can I decide! I haven't been living here for a whole year now, and God knows if I'll ever live here again," and with her sleeve she wiped away tears, "and you're making out that I'm in charge. You live here and the decision is up to you. Do whatever suits you, I have no say about it!"

The old oil worker was somewhat taken aback and began to poke in his clay pipe still more assiduously, although

there was no tobacco in it. Benedyo still stood by the threshold, his sack over his shoulder.

"The house is small, as you can see," the woman began again, "and maybe you wouldn't be comfortable. I can see you're a townsman, and you're not accustomed to the way things are here . . ."

The woman spoke that way because she surmised from the clouded brow of the oil worker that he wanted to turn Benedyo down.

"Eh, what of it if I'm a townsman?" replied Benedyo. "I'm also accustomed to all kinds of privations, to be sure. The same as any man who must work for a living. But, you see, here's my problem—I'm a little weak in the legs as a result of an accident, such things happen to us bricklayers, and the job I have here is near this place. A new factory is going up. So, you see, I'd like to find living quarters in this neighbourhood, just a place to sleep in, for I'll be at work the whole day long, and I'm not in shape to walk long distances through your Borislav mire. But in the rooming houses they didn't want to take me on as a steady roomer, and anyway, I would prefer lodgings with our own working folk. But if you . . ."

The old oil worker interrupted him at this point. Suddenly he threw his pipe to the ground, jumped from his stool and rushing up to Benedyo, he took the sack off his back with one hand and pushed him onto a bench with the other.

"But for God's sake, man," the old man shouted with comical anger, "don't dawdle, sit down! Sit down right here and may good fortune enter our house together with you. Why didn't you say what was what right from the beginning? Now I'm liable to think myself worse than other people! . . ."

Benedyo stared at the queer old chap as though he couldn't fathom his meaning, then asked:

"Well, what does that mean? Are you taking me in?"

"Can't you hear that I am?" the old man said. "Only you'll have to behave yourself, of course. If you don't, out you go tomorrow."

"I guess we'll get along," Benedyo said.

"Well, if we get along all right, you'll be a son to me, though to tell the truth, I haven't had any luck with my sons."

"What will you charge me?"

"Have you any family?"

"I have a mother."

"Is she old?"

"She's old."

"Well, then, you'll pay me a shustka per month."

Benedyo stared at the old man again.

"Didn't you mean to say per week?"

"I know best what I meant to say," the old man snapped. "What I said stands and enough said on that score."

Benedyo couldn't shake off his astonishment. In the meantime, the old fellow had seated himself on his stool again and, frowning, began to pack his pipe with tobacco.

"Maybe I should fetch some whiskey to seal the bargain?" Benedyo spoke up.

"Don't start coming around with any brew, fellow, don't even let me see any in the house, or I'll chuck you out together with it!" he snapped angrily.

"Excuse me," Benedyo apologized, "I don't drink myself, I wouldn't care if there never was any. But I've heard that everybody who works around oil in Borislav must drink and that's why . . ."

"The person who told you that spoke the truth, only, you see, there's a drop of falsehood together with the truth. It's always like that. Well, don't dawdle any more — take off your clothes and rest up from your journey, since you're not well!"

Benedyo took off his short overcoat, spread it on a bench below the window, and lay down to rest. He was actually very tired; his legs trembled under him from the long walk which was too much for them. But for some reason sleep would not come. His thoughts flitted like restless sparrows to his old mother in Drohobich and then to Borislav, where he was to live from now on. He recalled the stories the oil

workers had told him along the way; in his imagination they appeared not as words, but as living pictures. Here was a sick and helpless oil worker, abandoned by everyone, dying alone in some den somewhere in a hidden corner and crying in vain for food and drink — there was no one to bring him any! . . . There was a boss kicking a worker off his job, cheating him on his pay, abusing him and insulting him: but there was no one to stand up for the worker and assist him in his troubles. “Nobody cares for anything, except himself,” Benedyo thought, “and that’s why they all suffer. If they would only get together . . . So what would they do?” Benedyo couldn’t answer that. “How can they be brought together?” Benedyo didn’t know that, either. “Lord God,” he sighed at last with a helplessness that is usual among our common people, “lead me to a good idea!”

At that moment his contemplations were interrupted. Several oil workers entered the room and having greeted the old man, Matiy, sat down on a bench. Benedyo rose and began to look the newcomers over. First of all, there were two men who would immediately attract anybody’s attention anywhere. Tall and strong as two oak trees, with broad, red, slightly puffed faces and small grey eyes, in that wee house they looked like giants. They were so much alike in build, hair and eyes that you would have to watch and listen closely indeed to tell them apart. One of them sat on the bench beneath the window, his broad shoulders shutting out the light which came into the room from the setting sun. The other esconsed himself on a small stool by the door and, without a word to anyone, calmly began to fill his pipe, as though this place on the stool beside the door belonged to him and had been his for ages.

Apart from the two giants, Benedyo’s attention was drawn most to a short man who was no longer young and who seemed to be very talkative and lively. He hadn’t stopped darting from corner to corner since he entered the house, as though he was looking for something or trying to find a comfortable place to sit. He had looked Benedyo over several times, exchanged glances with Matiy, who followed his

movements with a smile, and had even whispered something in the ear of one of the giants, the one on the stool by the door. The giant only shook his head, and then arose, opened the iron door of the oven and shoved his pipe into the embers to get a good light. The lively man, meanwhile, made the rounds of all the corners once more, patted down his hair, which was bristly as a brush, set his belt right, and finally just waved his hands about.

Aside from these three men, there were another three or so in the room. On the bench Benedyo discerned in the dusk an old man with a long grey beard, but with a youthful healthy face and husky appearance. Beside him sat a young lad, roundfaced and rosy as a girl, but melancholy and morose, as though he were under sentence of death. Farther in the corner, completely in the dark, sat others, whose faces Benedyo couldn't make out. Several other oil workers entered, and a hubbub arose.

"Who's this, a bailiff come to take your furniture away for not paying your taxes?" spoke the giant, who was sitting beneath the window, in a bass voice that sounded like a horn.

"No, thank God," Matiy answered, "this is an honest man, I've found out, a worker, a bricklayer. He came today from Drohobich to this new factory they're going to put up close to here."

"Is that so?" replied the giant with a drawl. "Well, that's all right with me. Whose factory is it going to be?" he added, turning to Benedyo.

"Leon Hammerschlag's, the one, you know, who came here from Vienna about two years ago."

"Oho, that one! Oh, we have had notches for him a long time already. Isn't that so, Brother Derkach?"

The lively man was at the giant's side in a flash, dancing around him on his toes.

"That's true, that's true, he's well notched," he laughed, "but it wouldn't hurt to cut him a few more notches!"

"Certainly, it won't hurt," the giant confirmed. "But can we do our business here today, Brother Matiy, or are you

aiming to chase us out to look for another place, since you've got yourself a new roomer?"

The giant looked at Matiy sternly, and these words were evidently meant as a rebuke. Matiy felt this and became a bit confused, then he rose from the stool, took his pipe out of his mouth, and said:

"Lord forbid, I wouldn't chase you out! My dear brethren, once I've joined with you, I won't drop you, no fear of that. As to the new lodger . . . it's true that I did wrong, taking him in without asking your advice first, but you see, a man comes, he's weary and sick, and nobody wants to take him in, and you can see from his face — I'm an old hand at that—that he's a good man, so what could I do? . . . But then, what do you think? If he can't be with us, I'll send him away. But it seems to me that he would be good for us, too . . . He says he doesn't drink, that's one thing in his favour. And for another thing, he's going to work on the new factory, so he could give us some information about things there once in a while . . ."

"You say that he doesn't drink whiskey?" asked the giant.

"I myself heard him say so, but there he is, ask him yourself."

Silence reigned in the room. Benedyo sat in the corner on his coat, getting more and more puzzled over the meaning of all this, why these people were gathered here and what they wanted of him. He was astonished to hear Matiy apologizing, although he had said this was his house. But the most amazing thing of all was that the husky-voiced giant conducted himself here as though he were some kind of an officer, like a boss, calling them up one after another and whispering something into their ears, without moving from his place. Then he turned to Benedyo and began to question him in a stern voice, like a judge at a hearing, while they all turned their eyes on him.

"You're what, an apprentice bricklayer?"

"No, I'm a helper, and in the work on that factory, I don't know why the kindness, I'll be a master bricklayer."

The giant shook his head.

"Hm, a master? Well, how did you earn that? I suppose you know well how to squeal on your fellow-workers to the boss?"

Benedyo blazed up. For a moment he hesitated whether to answer the giant's question or to spit in his face, pack up and leave this house and these queer people. Then he checked himself.

"You're talking nonsense," he said sharply. "Maybe your father's son knows the informer's trade, but we don't go in for that. And as for the boss's favour, I didn't ask for it. Maybe it's because I was almost killed when we were letting down the foundation stone on his house!"

"Umhuh," the giant growled in a drawl, and his voice began to grow softer.

"Brother Derkach," he suddenly turned to the small, lively man, "don't forget to cut Leon Hammerschlag a notch for what this man has told us!"

"Naturally, I won't forget. Although it took place in Drohobich, so to speak, and we're only operating in Borislav, but that won't hurt. It won't go any easier with the boss for that."

"Well, but how about you," the giant continued to question Benedyo, "when you're a master craftsman here, will you be cruel and drive the labourers as the others do, will you suck them dry and throw them out just because of a word? . . . Of course, you will! The masters are all alike!"

Benedyo's patience was exhausted. He rose and picking up his coat, turned to Matiy:

"When you rented me lodging in your house," he said in a trembling voice, "you said that if I behaved myself, I would be a son to you. But tell me yourself, how can I be good if some kind of people come into the house and for no reason at all start picking on me and insulting me, I don't know why? If you took me in for this, it would have been better for you to have turned me away, because by this time I'd have found a more peaceful lodging! Now I'll have to go out into the night. But at least I'll know what sort of folk Borislav workers are! Good-bye!"

With these words he put on his coat and, lifting his bundle onto his shoulders, turned to the door. All were silent, only Matiy winked to the giant at the window. Meanwhile the other giant sat like a mountain in front of the door, closing the exit with his body, and although Benedyo said to him angrily, "Let me go!" — he didn't move a muscle, as though he hadn't heard a thing, only kept slowly puffing on his pipe.

"But good Lord, man," Matiy suddenly cried out with comic heat, "wait a bit, where are you running off to? I see that you can't take a joke! Wait and you'll see what it's all leading up to!"

"Why should I remain!" Benedyo replied angrily. "Perhaps you'll tell me to take some more insults from this man here of the kind he's been dishing out so far? I can't figure out where he could have got the idea that I'm cruel and do injury to people? . . ."

"So you consider that what I said was an insult to you?" the giant asked, half gently, half sternly.

"Naturally."

"Well, then, I beg your pardon."

"Don't beg my pardon! It would be better to be more polite and not to insult people, than to beg pardon afterwards. I'm a common man, a poor workman, but is that any reason why anybody who comes along should treat me like that? Or maybe you're banking on this, that you are strong, while I am weak, so you can bully me without fear of retaliation? Well, let me go away, I don't want to listen to your palaver!"

And he turned to the door again.

"Well, well, well," Matiy spoke up, "these people may start quarreling in earnest, themselves not knowing what for! Just wait, man, you are getting angry without knowing what it's about!"

"What do you mean, I don't know? Never fear, I'm not such a dunderhead," Benedyo retorted huffily.

"You don't know. You took this man's words for an insult, but he was talking like that only to test you!"

"Test me? About what?"

"To find out what's in your heart and in your mind. Now do you understand?"

"What does he want to know for?"

"You'll find out later. Now take off your coat and sit down again in your place. And don't stay huffy, fellow. If we went about getting huffy about everything that rubs us the wrong way, we wouldn't last a day, none of us. The way I see it, a man must suffer little hurts in order to avoid bigger ones. But among us it's usually the other way around, a man grumbles over small hurts, but stays mum when it comes to the big ones."

Benedyo still stood in the middle of the room in his coat and with the sack over his shoulder, and looked about at those present. In the meantime, Matiy lit a candle of yellow Borislav wax and in its light the faces of the oil workers who were gathered there appeared yellow and glum like the faces of corpses. For a second time Matiy took Benedyo's bag from his back and peeled the overcoat off him, and then, grasping him by the shoulder, led him to the giant who continued to sit, grim and threatening, by the window.

"Well, make up once and for all," said Matiy. "I keep thinking this man will prove a fine comrade to us."

Benedyo and the giant shook hands.

"What do we call you?" the giant asked.

"Benedyo Sinitsya."

"My name is Andrus Basarab, and over there is my brother Sen, while this is our 'notcher,' Derkach, and this old grandfather is Brother Stasyura, and that young lad is Brother Priydevolya, and those are other brethren, and then there's our host, too . . ."

"You are all probably from one village that you call one another brethren," said Benedyo, also astonished by the fact that here old and young men formed one fraternity, for the custom in the villages was that only people of the same age group entered into such relationships.

"No, we're not from one village, and that's not why we are brethren," Basarab replied, "but for another reason alto-

gether. But then, sit down and you'll see for yourself. And if you will want to, you can join our fraternity too."

This explanation astonished Benedyo still more. He sat down without a word and waited to see what would happen.

"Brother Derkach," said Andrus Basarab to the 'notcher,' "it's time to get down to our business. Where are your sticks?"

"They'll be here right away," Derkach answered and ran to the hallway, returning with a whole armload of thin sticks, tied together with a thong. Each stick had bigger or smaller notches cut into it, one after another, such as boys cut out when tending geese in the pasture, so that each can tell by the notches how many goslings he has in his care.

"Put a notch in for Leon on account of what Sinitsya told us," said Basarab further. Now a deep hush settled on the house. All sat where they could find a place and looked at Derkach, who settled himself on the fore part of the oven, laid the sticks down beside him, took a knife from his belt, and picking out one of the sticks, added another notch to the large number that were already there.

"Done," said Derkach, finishing the task and placing the stick back with the others.

"And now, my dear brethren," said Andrus, "tell us in turn what each one suffered during this past week, and whether he saw or heard of some cruelty or injustice. Who did it, to whom, and for what — tell everything, so that when the cup of our sufferings is full, when our time and our judgment day comes, every one will get what's coming to him!"

There was a minute of silence following this appeal, and then old Stasyura began to speak.

"You say that our time and our judgment day will come . . . Though I see that I'll not live to see it. Well, but at least you younger ones will . . . So, to make sure that each one gets his just and proper due, listen to what I saw and heard this week. Yosko Bergman, the superintendent at the place where I work, this week again beat four workmen, knocking out two teeth of a Boyko labourer, who was hired

to carry away the earth dug out during the sinking of this oil well. And for what? Because the poor Boyko, who was hungry and cold, didn't have the strength to tote a full basket of earth at a time!"

"Notch it, Derkach!" said Andrus in a calm and even voice, but his eyes were burning with a strange fire.

"That Boyko," Stasyura continued, "is a very fine person and I would have brought him here, only he must have fallen ill, because he hasn't showed up for work since the day before yesterday."

"Bring him," Andrus broke in. "The more of us there are, the stronger our power, and nothing binds people together so much as common misery and common injustice. And when we have sufficient power, then our judgment day will be at hand, do you hear, old fellow? . . ."

The old man nodded his head and continued to speak:

"Motya Krum, the paymaster, again shortchanged the men of our outfit by five shustkas each this week, and even threatened all of us that we'll be fired off the job if we complain. They say he was buying a well at Mraznitsya and he lacked 59 rinskys for the purchase, so he had to take it out of the workers' hide at the next pay."

The old man was silent a moment, while Derkach found Motya Krum's stick and cut a new notch in it. Then he continued:

"Yesterday I was walking past Moshko Fink's inn. Suddenly I heard an uproar. Two of Fink's sons had cornered a man and were beating him so ruthlessly, punching him in the ribs, that the man could hardly groan any longer. When they finally let him go, he couldn't walk on the road without help, and started spitting blood . . . I took him by the arm and helped him along, asking what the trouble was and why they had hurt him so cruelly. 'It's my bad luck,' the man replied and he wept. 'Last week I ran up a bit of debt at that damned innkeeper's, thinking I'd get the money and pay him back. Well, payday came and the paymaster must have forgotten about me or something, for he didn't read my name out. I stood there, waiting, until all the others

were paid off, and still he didn't call me. Then I started to go to him and ask what's up, but he quick and slammed the door in my face. I knocked, and I rapped, and I shouted, but it didn't help. His servants ran out yet and beat me and called me a drunk, saying I was trying to start a riot. So I went away. Later I met the paymaster on the street and I asked him why he hadn't given me my pay. He glared at me and then he shouted, 'You sot, how dare you accost me on the street! Where were you when the pay was being handed out? I don't know you here, go for your pay where everybody else is paid!' — But the pay-office was closed today. I got hungry and went to Moshko's to get a meal on credit until I get my money, when those two bears came up, saying — Pay, pay up what you owe! No matter how much I begged them, and told them what had happened, it didn't help at all! They pushed me into a corner and nearly beat the soul out of my body!"

"Notch it, Derkach, notch it!" said Basarab in a hard, stern voice, having listened to this story with set teeth. "Our oppressors are getting bolder all the time, a sign that their punishment is hanging over them already. Notch it, Brother, notch it quickly."

"That's how it is," Stasyura continued, "our oppressors have let loose and are going all out, bullying the working people, because they are getting so rich! And the more you look and listen, the more poverty and injustice you find for the people, and the more wealth and luxury for them. Right now hosts of people are swarming into Borislav because everywhere in the villages there is hunger, drought and disease. But is it any better here? Day after day I see sick, hungry, unemployed people in the back alleys, they lie there and groan and wait only for death, because they have long ceased to expect human pity. And now, see, they've cut our wages and keep on cutting them very week, until there's not enough to live on! Bread is dearer and dearer all the time, and if there will be no crop this year, we'll all starve to death. That's the injustice we all suffer, the one that strikes

us all to the very marrow, but I myself don't know for whom to cut a notch for it! . . ."

The old man made this speech in a voice that was livelier than usual and his lips trembled with emotion. Having finished, he looked around at all of them and then rested his eyes on Andrus Basarab's gloomy countenance.

"Yes, yes, you're right, Brother Stasyura," all those present cried, "that's our common injustice: poverty, helplessness and hunger!"

"But whom shall we notch for it?" the old man asked again. "Or should we bear it patiently, that biggest injustice of all, the one we all suffer from, and notch only the small, partial injustices which together make up that big one?"

Andrus Basarab looked at Stasyura and all the other brethren, at first with a dismal and seemingly unmoved air, but finally something began to shine in his face as though there was a hidden happiness at the bottom of his heart. He rose and stood erect, his head almost touching the ceiling of the tiny house.

"No, we won't suffer that general injustice either, or if we do, it won't be meekly and quietly, like shorn sheep. Every injustice must be punished, every injury must be avenged, and that here, on this earth, for we don't know what the judgment will be like in the other world! And do you think that while we are notching all those petty partial wrongs, we have forgotten about the big one? No! Why, every single wrong, even the smallest which a working man suffers, is part of that general injustice to the people, which presses us all down and penetrates to the bones of each one of us. When our day of judgment and of dealing out punishment comes, do you think that we won't take revenge for the general injustice too?"

Stasyura shook his head sadly, as though at bottom he did not fully believe Basarab's promise.

"Hey, hey, Brother Andrus," he said, "you say that we'll take revenge? For one thing, we don't know yet when that will be . . . For another, of what use will it be to us that

some day maybe we'll be avenged, when this does not ease our sufferings today? And if we are avenged, do you think things will be better afterwards?"

"What's the matter with you, old man?" Andrus shouted at him sternly, his eyes flashing. "Why are you wailing without cause? So it's hard for us to suffer! Don't I know that, and don't we all? But who can make it so we shouldn't suffer, so the workingman wouldn't suffer? Nobody, never! In other words, we must suffer until Judgment Day and that's that. Whether it's hard or not, whose business is it? Suffer and keep still, don't let anybody see that you're taking it hard. Suffer, and if you can't lift yourself out of poverty, at least exact vengeance for it, and this will at least ease your pain a little. That's my idea, and all of you acknowledge that it's correct. Isn't that so?"

"Yes," the brethren chorused, but their voices were gloomy, as though this being correct did not please them very much, and did not lie close to their hearts.

"Well, if that's so," Andrus continued, "there's no need to tarry. Keep on telling what injustices came to your notice."

He sat down. Silence fell on the room. Then Matiy began to talk. In his neighborhood a workman had died in a dark closet; nobody knew how long he had been ill and had lain there, and the house owners refused to tell any one. It was rumoured that the worker had had some money saved up, and that when he fell sick, the house owners took the money away from him and then starved him and kept him locked up until he died. The body was frightfully thin, long unwashed and blue. And the day before yesterday a woman spent the night at another neighboring rooming house. That night she gave birth. She had no money, so the next day they threw her out of the house with her infant. An oil worker, who knew the woman, said she took the child to the priest to have it baptized, but the priest wouldn't baptize it unless she would tell who the father was. Then this woman threw the baby into an oil well and she herself went to the municipal authorities, shouting that they should hang

her right there and then, because she didn't want to live any longer. Matiy didn't know what happened to her after that.

Story followed story, all equal in their gravity and deafening in their crying injustice. And after each related instance, the one who was speaking would pause, waiting for the recorder, Derkach, to make a notch in a stick, so that "every one should be repaid in full." Some of the brethren spoke with such calm, unmoved, almost dead expressions, that their very voices and faces were grave facts of a kind deserving to be notched to the account of the general social injustice and oppression. Others got heated up as they spoke, cursed the oppressors and demanded swift punishment for them . . .

\* \* \*

"Has nobody else anything to report?" asked Andrus.

Nobody spoke up.

"That means our business for today is finished! Leave one by one!"

But despite this command, nobody moved. All looked at each other somehow oddly. Andrus glanced at them sternly, not knowing what was up. Then Stasyura, the eldest of the brethren, rose to his feet.

"Listen, Brother Basarab," he said in a calm voice, "to what we've been discussing among ourselves, the brethren, during the past several days . . . I'm not speaking just for myself, but for all of us. You remember that when we banded together to gather up all the wrongs done to the people and to mete out workers' justice to those whom we can't put in the dock in the boss courts, you promised us that as soon as the proper quantity of people's misfortune had accumulated, we'd total it up to see for whom the measure was already full to the brim. Isn't that so?"

"Yes," Andrus replied, somewhat reluctantly.

"So for almost a year already we're accumulating the notches that denote human wrongs. Brother Derkach has notched a stack of sticks. And we ask you, when will there be a general accounting?"

"The time isn't here yet, but it will come soon," answered Andrus.

"Soon, soon, but the dew will eat your eyes out before the sun rises! You see yourself that our oppressors, growing wealthy through our labours, are riding ever higher. It's time they had at least some sort of warning from us!"

"There will be a warning," said Andrus, firmly and calmly.

"What sort? When?" the questions came from all sides.

"That's my concern. You'll hear about it when the deed is done. There's no call to talk about it beforehand," answered Andrus. "And the general accounting isn't far off, either. The oak sapling must grow close to the clouds before lightning will strike it. Wait a bit longer . . . and now, goodnight!"

The brethren all knew Andrus Basarab's strong, decisive character, and that they could rely on his word, so without any further questions they prepared to leave.

\* \* \*

Andrus paced about the room a few times, trying to return a calm expression to his face, although it was evident that he was greatly agitated. Then he came up to Benedyo and straightened out his giant figure.

"Well, did you see us at work?"

"I did."

"And what have you got to say about it?"

Benedyo hung his head as though he wished to collect his scattered thoughts.

"I see that you are intending to do something great and terrible, though I can't figure out where you get such ideas."

"Where? Oh, that's a long story, and anyway it has nothing to do with the matter."

"And then, will you have enough will power to carry out what you've conceived?"

"We sow, but we can't tell whether the seed will yield threefold or tenfold!"

“And afterwards . . . another thing . . .” Benedyo faltered in his speech. “Have you given thought . . .”

“To what?”

“To the most important thing . . .”

“What’s that?”

“What benefit will there be from what you do, and who will benefit?”

Andrus glanced at Benedyo intently and then roared with harsh laughter.

“Hahaha, benefit! Why must there be any benefit?”

“Well, the way I see it,” Benedyo replied calmly, “when something is done, and done deliberately, you must also figure out what benefits it will bring, and to whom, isn’t that so?”

“Hmmm, you’re at liberty to think so! But here’s my idea: the enemy is pressing me from all sides, I have no escape, so what do I do? I load my gun. It’s all the same to me, whether I kill one of the enemy or myself.”

“No, no, no,” Benedyo quickly remonstrated, “that’s just blind, hopeless despair talking in you, not reason. Has it already come to this, that there’s no other way out? And even if matters stood that way, do you believe that it’s the same, whether you kill an enemy or yourself? If you kill yourself, so much the easier for the enemy to do what he wills!”

Now it was Andrus’s turn to hang his heavy head and collect his ideas together.

“You’re right!” he said to Benedyo finally. “This has to be figured out. Do you want to join our fraternity and figure it out together with us?”

“I’ll join, but I won’t be a blind instrument of your will!”

“No!”

“And let every one be free to think as he wants and to share his thoughts with the others.”

“We have that freedom now. You heard tonight . . .”

“Yes, but I want to have it made clear once more, for myself and for every one.”

“Fine!”

“That being so, I’ll be a Brother and think, along with you, about whether there isn’t some way out of this injustice which all the people suffer.”

Andrus, followed by Matiy, joyously embraced Benedyo.

\* \* \*

The workdays in Borislav crept by slowly and painfully, each the same as the one before. Benedyo worked at the factory site all day, drafting plans for the buildings, supervising the workers, seeing to it that bricks, stone, lime and all the other materials were delivered on time, and all the while he treated the workers so fraternally, in such a sincere and friendly fashion, as though he wished at every step to demonstrate that he was their equal and their brother, a poor workman the same as they all were, as though he wished to apologize for becoming their superior through no effort on his own part. After work, in the evenings, he often walked the muddy streets of Borislav till late at night, looking into the filthy doss houses, the packed shanties and closets where the workers lived, often striking up a conversation with old and young alike, asking them about their life and tribulations. His heart was heavy when he listened to their stories and from close up saw the wretchedness and filth of their life, but it became still heavier when he saw how the exploiters, coining wealth from that wretchedness and filth, ostentatiously rode in luxurious carriages, dressed in expensive clothes, and splashed mud on the ignorant, bowed throng.

The days passed slowly and with heavy gait, and in Borislav life for the working people kept getting harder and harder. From near and from far, from the mountains and from the valleys, from the villages and from the towns, day after day hundreds of people kept coming to Borislav like bees swarming to the beehive.

Work! Work! Any kind of work! No matter how hard! No matter how low the wages! Just to keep from starving to death! — that was the general cry, the general groan, which hung like a cloud over the heads of these thousands of ema-

ciated people, blue with cold and hunger. It seemed as though heaven and earth were locked up with iron keys, and all hopes of the mouzhik-farmers were burned out together with their grain and oats on their strips of land which had turned brick-red from the drought. Cattle died for lack of pasture. Nothing else remained, but to get jobs, but there were no jobs in all the Carpathian foothills, except in Borislav. And so the poor people from all sides congregated there, for that was their last hope, the way a drowning man grasps for a straw. It seemed as though heaven and earth were locked up with iron keys, yet the poor people imagined that the wealthy of Borislav would prove more merciful and would open the gates of their wealth to them! . . .

The wealthy of Borislav wanted nothing better! They had long nourished the hope for a substantial famine that would skyrocket their profits. And they had not been wrong! Cheap and obedient workers flowed to them in rivers, tearfully begging jobs no matter what the wage — and the wages continually diminished. Meanwhile, the price of bread kept rising; it was delivered to Borislav in small quantities and very irregularly, so that even workers with a few pennies in their pockets often went faint with hunger. Thus the conditions of the new arrivals were little improved, while the regular Borislav residents were markedly worse off. Every week the owners cut the pay and those who objected were shut up with the jeering words: “If you don’t want to take what’s offered, you may go off and starve to death, because there are ten men begging for your job, and for less pay, too!”

Benedyo thought about all this many times during his walks about Borislav. “What would happen,” the thought came to him, “if all these thousands of people got together and decided: We won’t go to work until our wages are raised? It would seem that the owners wouldn’t be able to hold out very long: one has a contract to fill by a certain date, another has notes coming due, which he won’t be in a position to pay unless he sells his oil and wax — they would be compelled to give in! His mind, sharpened by the sight

of the endless panorama of Borislav wretchedness, firmly took hold of that straw and wouldn't let go. But the more deeply he studied this means of gaining some improvement, the more difficulties and even insuperable obstacles there appeared. How to bring about such an agreement and the unity of all that great mass, in which each one cares only for himself, and is concerned only with keeping alive? And even if this proved possible, you can be sure that the rich won't surrender at once: you would not only have to threaten, but also to carry out your threat to march off all the jobs. Wouldn't the rich then recruit other workers from other villages and thus bring the whole effort to nought? And even if that was successfully prevented, what would the breadless and jobless thousands in Borislav live on during the period when there would be no work? No, there's no way out at all! The dawn isn't breaking from any direction . . .

And Benedyo, arriving at such hopeless conclusions, closed his hands into fists, pressed them to his forehead, and ran through the streets like a man possessed.

At the same time he waited impatiently for the next gathering of the fraternity, hoping to arrive, with its help, at a clearer understanding of what must be done at the present time. During his walks through Borislav he sometimes met one or another of the brethren and saw that they were all somehow depressed, as though they were being crushed, and that the uncertainty and waiting were eating into their vitals — and this brought the hope that some one from among them would come up with a good idea. At home Benedyo was silent. Old Matiy was too busy with his court case, and every evening he carried on whispered conversations either with Andrus, Stasyura or some other oil worker. Finally they all went to Drohobich and didn't return for several days, and the solitude became a still heavier burden to Benedyo. Heavy thinking, to which he wasn't accustomed, seemed to keep him in a fever and quickly drained his strength. He became thin and pale, his long face became longer still, only his eyes burned feverishly deep in their

sockets like two live coals. Nevertheless, he didn't abandon his ideas, lose hope or cease sympathizing with those poor people who looked out coldly and hopelessly from every cranny at the inimical world, and quietly, without protest, prepared to die before their time. Benedyo couldn't think up anything, but he felt deeply, with all his heart and with every nerve: "They must be helped!" But how to help them? His thoughts beat against this "how?" as though against an impregnable stone mountain, and his physical and spiritual strength was broken, but he never lost hope that his difficulty would be overcome.

One evening Benedyo came home from work later than usual and he found Sen Basarab, Andrus's brother, beside the house. He was sitting on the mound outside the house, puffing his pipe, with his usual expression of unruffled calm on his ruddy face. They greeted each other.

"Isn't Matiy in?"

"No."

"And Andrus?"

"He hasn't come either. Nor has Stasyura."

"Evidently they started something out of the ordinary in Drohobich."

"We'll see," blurted out Sen, and then fell silent.

"Did you hear what happened?" he asked after a minute, entering the house with Benedyo.

"No, what was it?"

"A parable."

"What sort?"

"What sort! One gentleman is no more. You know the one that our Priydevolya complained of, that paymaster, remember? . . ."

"I do, I do! What happened to him?"

"What else? He wasn't around for several days, and to-day they fished him out of an oil well. A commission has arrived already, they're going to cut up the poor body, as though it can tell them how it landed in a well and got a hook in its ribs to boot!"

A cold shiver ran up Benedyo's back at these words.

"Exactly the same as with Matiy's friend, Ivan Pivtorak," he whispered.

"Yes, exactly and yet not exactly the same. That one was pushed in by an innkeeper, while this one . . ."

He didn't finish the sentence, and Benedyo didn't ask any further, he understood Sen's words very well.

"Well, so what?" he asked after a moment of heavy silence.

"What do you mean? The wolf used to kill, and now the wolf too is killed. There are no clues."

"What do the people say?"

"Which people? The commission? The commission will eat and drink its fill, and it will cut up the body and dice it, and then it will go away."

"No, I'm not asking about the commission, but about what the oil workers are saying?"

"The oil workers? What can I tell you? They stood around, looked at the remains, shook their heads, a few quietly whispered — 'The departed was a thief, God punish him!' — and they went back to work."

"That means that the deed was for nothing, just so much labour lost," Benedyo said through set teeth.

"How's that? For nothing? Lost?" Sen asked in wonder.

"It won't help other people."

"But there's one rascal less on the earth."

"Well, there'll be a new rascal in his place tomorrow, never fear."

"But at least he'll be afraid."

"Of what? If they don't find out who did it, they'll announce that he slipped and fell in accidentally. And if they do find out, they'll take the man who did it and put him away, so whom should the rascal be afraid of?"

Sen listened to this talk greatly puzzled. He had expected Benedyo to rejoice, and here he was met with reproaches instead.

"So what do you expect?"

"I expect that when something is undertaken, and especially when such a great sin is taken on one's conscience, that it should be something useful which brings some bene-

fit not only to one person but to all. Otherwise I don't see why it should even have been started."

"Hohol!" Sen shook his head, said goodbye, and left.

After his departure, still heavier thoughts crowded Benedyo's mind. "Well, maybe it's so," he thought, "maybe we're better off since there's one rogue the less in the world? . . . But does that make things better for the good people? Not a bit! Did it make things better at least for those oil workers who are rejoicing over his demise? No again. Another paymaster will take his place, and everything will be the same, only maybe he'll be even worse than the other one was. Now if with one blow you could get rid of all the evil people at once . . . But no, there's no way to do it. There's no use thinking about it! Rather think about what's under our noses, something we are capable of doing!"

The fraternity of oil workers, to which Benedyo had been so suddenly accepted the day he came to Borislav, vitally affected his thoughts and gave them a definite, though at first not a very clear direction. Already at the first gathering, when his imagination was so powerfully gripped by the stories of the oil workers and their demand that some action at long last be undertaken, already at that time his thoughts had conjured up a picture of a large and powerful fraternity which would unite the small detachments of workers all together and then would set this combined strength in motion and protect each worker from poverty and injustice much better than he can do it each one by himself. The idea of such a brotherhood emerged ever clearer and stronger in Benedyo's head from the ceaseless clash of ideas, abetted by the ever worsening and more heartwringing events. It seemed to him that only by such a co-ordination of their own strength for their mutual assistance and protection could the workers win any sort of amelioration for themselves now. And he decided that no matter what, he would introduce this idea at the next meeting of the fraternity and exert all his strength to turn Andrus Basarab's group from the dangerous path of hatred and vengeance, which at the present time, when they were so few, could only

harm every one of them and help nobody — and to direct the attention and energy of the fraternity to a broader, less violent and, as it seemed to Benedyo, a more fruitful field of work.

The meeting of the brethren was called for Sunday evening. At noon that Sunday Matiy, Andrus, Stasyura and some other oil workers returned from Drohobich. Matiy was in exceptionally good spirits, talkative and expansive, but when Benedyo asked him the news and what they had been doing such a long time in Drohobich, he only smacked his lips and said:

“All’s well, young fellow, all’s well!”

Darkness had not yet fallen, and Matiy had barely lighted the night-lamp of mineral wax when the brethren came trooping into the house. Derkach wriggled in ahead of the others like a lizard, said hello to Matiy and Benedyo, and began poking into one corner after another, as was his custom, rolling up his sleeves and glancing to all sides. Then came the others. The two Basarab brothers were dour and silent as usual. Stasyura squeezed Benedyo’s hand very earnestly, and all the others also treated him as an equal, as “one of their own.” Priydevolya came last. His young face was very pale and drawn, he looked about from the corners of his eyes and sat down in a dark corner beside the threshold. There was somehow less life and noise in the company as a whole than was usual. All seemed to be depressed by something, though no one would confess it. All felt that they were willy-nilly nearing an important turning point, where they would have to speak out openly and strongly. All sensed that the recent case of the killing of the paymaster was a forerunner of a new turn in the affairs of Borislav. But the brethren didn’t know what sort of turn this was to be, the kind of events that were approaching, nor what their attitude should be towards them, although each one hoped that these things would be clarified in the general debate, to some extent at least. So it was no wonder that this meeting opened with a depressed, heavy, apprehensive silence, though the brethren had shown up in full force and before

the appointed time. Each one knew that something had to be done in regard to the ever worsening conditions in Borislav, the daily increase of poverty and the influx of unemployed, looking for jobs — but nobody could explain how and by what means it should be accomplished and that was what each one was waiting for the general meeting to explain.

Andrus Basarab alone acted as though he sensed nothing out of the ordinary. He took his seat at the table by the window and looked over the company.

“Well, everybody’s present,” he said, “and we can start our business. Hey, Derkach, fetch your sticks!”

Derkach, obedient and quick, was already pushing his way through the brethren who were standing in the centre of the room, when old Stasyura suddenly rose and asked for the floor.

“Well, what is it?” Andrus said without enthusiasm. “Say your say, Stasyura, though I think it would have been better if Derkach had those sticks within reach first. It wouldn’t hurt to notch some of the more interesting items.”

“No,” said Stasyura in a firm voice, “I won’t be saying anything that will need to be marked down.”

“Well, what then?” asked Andrus, and he let his eyes wander over all the brethren again. He saw that they were sitting or standing with hangdog faces and didn’t look at Stasyura, but made as though they were getting ready to listen to his talk. Andrus guessed that this had been previously arranged.

“This, Brother Andrus,” the old oil worker spoke boldly, “that it’s high time we found ourselves another and a better job than this notching. What are we, children, or what? Brother Derkach has whole bundles of those notched sticks, but what’s the good of them? Whom has thus cutting of notches helped?”

Andrus was looking at the old man with amazement in his eyes. In truth, nobody had spoken that way before, and in his own mind, the question kept turning over: “Yes, what’s the good of this notching?” But since he couldn’t im-

mediately find a sufficiently convincing answer, he decided to hold on to his old position in order to provoke deeper argument.

"Whom has it helped?" he drawled. "Whom were we supposed to help by what we're doing? Have you forgotten that we're doing it for revenge?"

"For revenge, that's so! But how are you going to get revenge with those sticks? If we're to have revenge, I think we must use other means, and not waste our time in childish games. If we want revenge, we must have strength, and there's no strength for us in those sticks."

"That's so," Andrus answered, "but we want, when the time comes, to mete out justice to those who have wronged us, in order to have a clear conscience."

"Our work is futile," Stasyura replied to that. "We can have a clear conscience even now, for each one of us knows only too well how much he suffers and from what, and how he bears it. But for vengeance, to vanquish evil, apart from a clear conscience we need strength, but where have we got that strength?"

"Hear, hear," the brethren chimed in, "what kind of strength have we? Even if we had three wagon loads of notched sticks, this wouldn't give us a thimbleful more strength!"

"So, where do we have to go for strength?" Andrus asked.

"We must allow more people into our fraternity and bring everybody together, show them all one aim," Benedyo spoke up.

All glanced at him somehow distrustfully and fearfully, and only Stasyura backed him up joyfully:

"That's what I say, too, that's what I say!"

"But for God's sake, brethren, have you given a thought to what the result will be? Any old tramp will turn us in, swear out a complaint against us in the city, and we'll all be manacled and put in Sambir jail as bandits!" said Andrus.

These words sent shivers up the backs of the brethren,

and they all glanced anxiously and with curiosity at Benedyó, as though waiting to hear what he would say to that.

"That may be true," Benedyó said, "but if it's true, what does it mean? It means that we won't be able to come out publicly with the aims which we've been pursuing until now. In order to band the people together we must show them more than revenge, because nobody's belly is filled with vengeance, but we must show them some benefit, some assistance, some improvement!"

"Hohoho, he's always blowing about assistance!" the bass voice of Sen Basarab was heard from the doorway at the moment when Benedyó, due to his intense excitement, had found himself out of breath and was compelled to pause. He felt that his blood was beginning to boil and that his thoughts, which up till now had stubbornly evaded him, by some miracle now began to flow freely and take shape in his head. Sen Basarab's half angry and half jeering words were to him what spurs are to a race horse.

"Yes, I'm always talking about assistance, and I won't stop talking about it, because it seems to me that only we ourselves can help ourselves, that nobody else will save us. Our bosses aren't concerned that the worker should have a better life. If they could, they would make his life even worse than it is, because they have it good only when the worker is brought to the last ditch and has nothing to take hold of, and so must deliver himself to their mercy. Then they can compel him to do any kind of work and pay him what they want, because when a man is hungry and naked he has no choice! No, if we don't want to perish like this forever, we ourselves must help ourselves. And vengeance, figure it out for yourself, where will it lead? Things won't get better for us from any amount of vengeance, unless we want to open war in the whole country, or something! And as it is, you punish one bloodsucker, but another has long had his eye on that position. And you'll not even give them a scare, because you'll have to do everything secretly, of course, so nobody will know who did it and why. And if they find out, it will be worse yet, for they'll take a person

and throw him in prison and let him rot there! I think that we must give this question very deep consideration and then look for another way out."

Again Benedyo fell silent, and all the brethren also were quiet. Benedyo's words impressed themselves on their convictions with irresistible force, but unfortunately, they only toppled down what was there before—the hope for revenge—without putting anything new in its place. Only Sen Basarab, sitting on the threshold with his pipe in his teeth, shook his head dubiously, but he said nothing more. Even Andrus, although you could see that to him this change in the ideas of some of the brethren was very unpleasant and undesirable, even his powerful shoulders sagged and his head drooped. Benedyo's words caused him to become lost in thought.

"It would be good, that's sure," he said finally, "but how to do it, how to help ourselves when we don't even have the strength for each man to help himself?"

"That's the point, that there's no power in a single person, but if many people unite, there'll be power. You can't lift a huge rock by yourself, but several of us together lift it like nothing at all. It's not too hard for an oil worker who is earning an average wage to contribute a shustka in dues every week, but let a hundred of us do it and already we've got ten rinskys weekly, and at least we will be able to help several unfortunates in their dire need! Don't I speak the truth, brethren?"

"Hmm, it's the truth, of course, yes, yes!" came from all sides.

Only in the corner by the door Priydevolya sat morose, and Sen Basarab grumbled resentfully:

"It's all right for him, a townsman, to talk about dues! Just try and see if you'll find ten such persons in the whole of Borislav, who will want to give you those dues!"

"Well," Benedyo replied warmly, "you're saying that, Brother, just to talk. There are twelve of us here and I think that every one of us will gladly agree to it."

"We'll join, we'll join!" some brethren cried.

"Only we'll have to consider well what we're collecting

that money for and what's to be done with it!" Andrus said sedately.

"Well, of course, let's start considering right away!" Stasyura backed him up.

"No," said Benedyo, "let us first of all decide whether we should contribute dues or not. I see that some of the brethren here aren't happy about it and would rather that things remained as they were!"

"But you're twisting, too," Matiy interrupted him somewhat angrily. Up till now he had been sitting silently beside Andrus, at first as though lost in thought about some other matters, but later more and more interested and finally attentively listening to everything that was said in the room. "Don't ask whether somebody finds it pleasant or unpleasant to listen to. If you know something good and wise and beneficial to everybody, then out with it, tell it plain and unvarnished. If we see that your ideas are better than other people's, we'll accept them; and if they are worse, well, then you can start apologizing for taking up our time with foolishness!"

After such vexing encouragement, Benedyo began to talk "plain and unvarnished":

"If we're going over to the system of dues for mutual assistance," he began, "we'll have to change everything completely, you know. No more notching, no more crime . . . and we'll have to speak altogether differently to the people. Stress assistance to them, not revenge. Of course, we won't cover up injustices and thievery, but we'll guide the folks to band together, because nobody can stand up to the rich and powerful as one individual, but all together, they can do it more easily."

"They can?" doubting Sen spoke up again. "I'd like to know how? Will they compel the Jew to pay more for work, or what?"

"And why shouldn't they be able to force higher pay?" Benedyo picked up the argument. "What if they all made a pact and said: We won't go to work until the pay is raised?"

"Ah, that's true! A grand ideal!" the brethren chorused. Even Andrus's face became somewhat brighter.

"Then they would bring in new workers from all over and fire you," Sen replied.

"And what if we stood like a rock and didn't let the new ones in, but asked them to wait until we had won our fight? Maybe it would be a good idea in such circumstances to send our men out to the neighbouring villages to spread the word that until such and such a time let no one come to Borislav, until our war is over!"

"Hurrah!" the brethren shouted.

"Well, it's fine to say: war, stop work! But even if everybody agreed to this, tell me, please, what will they live on while they are out of work? It's difficult even to imagine that the rich would give in and agree voluntarily to raise the workers' pay the very first day. Maybe it will take a week, or even longer, to wait without work, and how will you feed all those people?"

This reproach was truly weighty and the workers' faces grew long again. Their freshly kindled hope for a modern war and victory over the rich was as yet too weak and uncertain, and it began to recede at the first obstacle.

"That's what we need the dues collections for, to serve us in such circumstances. We can't plan action until we've saved up a fair sum out of those dues, enough for a week or two weeks. It is understood that those who refuse to pay dues and who would later want to go to work, will be taken by the scruff of the neck and heaved out of Borislav, so as not to spoil our business. Our people could also hire out for other jobs during the work stoppage, in the woods or on construction, so long as it isn't in the oil industry."

"That's good advice! Let's do it!" the oil workers clamoured.

\* \* \*

"The main thing now," said Benedyo, "is to recruit people to our company. Whoever you work with or meet at the inn, or get to talking with on the street, immediately guide the conversation in that direction! Explain everything: how

miserable the wages are, and what can be done about it. And let us collect dues. I think that each one of us should collect among his own acquaintances and every evening turn over whatever he collected to the treasurer, whom we'll have to elect here tonight."

"Fine, fine, let's elect a treasurer," they all shouted. "Let's see, who would make a good treasurer?"

One person after another was suggested, but they finally came to the conclusion that Sen Barasab would make the best treasurer.

"What, you want me to be your treasurer?" he said with hostility when he heard this. "Never! From now on I don't want to be associated with you at all! Neither I, nor my brother."

"You don't want to belong? Why?" all cried out.

"Because you are leaving the path which you had chosen after thorough consideration. I won't switch roads!"

"But who is switching?" Andrus said. "There's no change being made here at all!"

"What, are you with them too?" Sen said gloomily.

"Yes, I'm with them!"

"Have you forgotten your vow?"

"No, I haven't."

"Well, you're trampling on it, whether you've forgotten it or not."

"I am not! Just listen and don't get hot!"

Andrus went up to him and began quietly to speak in his ear. Whatever it was that he said didn't meet with Sen's approval at first, but after a while his face smoothed out bit by bit, and at last he cried out almost joyfully:

"Well, if it's like that, then it's all right! I was a fool not to guess! Greetings, Brothers, and I'll be your treasurer, and I hope that you'll have no complaints about me!"

"And now, one more thing," said Benedyo, who this day found himself catapulted from a rank-and-file worker to the leader of them all, in a strong and happy voice. "Brothers and comrades! You know that I'm a common workman like all of you, that I grew up in poverty and need—just a poor

bricklayer's helper, that's all. Suddenly and without asking for it, I have been favoured by Hammerschlag, who made me a master bricklayer and then his construction manager at the new oil refinery. I have nothing to thank him for, since I didn't ask for his favours, and actually he's the one who profits by it, since he doesn't need to hire a construction manager separately. He is paying me three rinskys daily, a large sum for a poor worker like me. I have an old mother in Drohobich. I must send her some of my pay, say two rinskys every week. Another two rinskys I spend on myself. That means there's fourteen rinskys left over every week. I pledge to turn it all over to our treasury!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the brethren. "Long live Brother Benedyol!"

"I also pledge one rinsky per week!"

"I pledge five shustkas!"

"Five shustkas is my pledge, too!"

"Here are my three shustkas!"

"Here's mine!"

"Mine, too!"

Benedyol's talk, and especially his example, had inspired and kindled enthusiasm in everyone. Sen Basarab began collecting dues right there and then, while Priydevolya, whom he got to be his assistant, marked down what each one contributed with a carpenter's pencil on a piece of wrapping paper from a package of tobacco.

\* \* \*

In the autumn, when the flowers have faded, when the honey-dew stops falling and the bees' harvest is over, a noisy and uproarious life comes for a while to the beehives. Just like people, when their heavy labour is done, the bees like to chatter, gathering in groups before the cracks and beside the openings, to buzz a bit and shake out their wings. At first you can't see what it's all about and where it is leading. Nothing new has as yet taken place in the hive. A few diligent workers still fly stubbornly to the fields every morning, to return at the day's end with but skimpy returns on their

legs. The sated drones as yet hum in their pride, promenading between the honeycombs full of honey, and go out at noon every blessed day to the roof of the hive to bask in the sun, breathe the fresh air and stretch and exercise their wings which had never known labour. As yet there seems to be complete peace and exemplary harmony in the hive but at the same time a new spirit is making itself felt in the hive. The worker-bees whisper something in secret among themselves. They shake their heads in a suspicion manner, and, ominously rub their pincers together and kick their legs. Who knows what this is all about and what is in store for the bees' kingdom? Certainly the drones have no inkling and they continue dining well, humming as they promenade between the honey-filled combs, and coming out every blessed day at noon to the top of the hive to take the sun and the fresh air and exercise their wings, which know not work . . .

That's what began taking place in Borislav a few days following the meeting described above. Who knows how or from where, but a new spirit came to Borislav. And while a new current of fresh air is usually first and most strongly felt in the upper strata, here the very opposite took place. The populous common strata at the bottom felt it first and were the first to be roused by it. And who can tell how it began? Out of the blue sky, at the cranks, at the handmills, at the wax depots, at the inns while drinking whiskey—everywhere the oil workers began to talk about how hard life was for all of them, how difficult the work was in Borislav and how the bosses, without any right or justice, on their own continued to reduce wages, to wrong, cheat and push around the workers and even to make sport of their victims. No one could have told you who started these conversations, because all these stories of hardship were long deeply carved on each one's own hide and backed by personal experience. Once they began, these talks did not die down but spread wider and wider and grew stronger and louder. It was as though all the people had only this day become aware of their sorry and hopeless condition and didn't want to talk

of anything else, and each talk ended with the painful, difficult question: "Lord, must we suffer so forever? Is there no way out for us? Can't something be done about this evil?" No one suggested a way out, yet the talks did not die down, but to the contrary, grew louder and sharper. People who at first spoke of their troubles without feeling, as of something inevitable and decreed by divine will, after further thought and more talks with acquaintances, close friends and older oil workers, or generally with people who had been around more, began to get the conviction that they had been wrong, that their troubles could be fixed, but since they didn't know how, they began to grow impatient and irritable, and walked and talked as though in a fever, avidly grasping at every word that might help to explain their unhappy lot. These conversations penetrated to the smallest huts and the darkest corners, and spread all around like flames over dry straw. The small boys who worked in the muck and the girls and women who extracted the wax from the clay — they too began to complain of how bad conditions were and to say that they simply must talk things over and find ways to help themselves . . .

The bosses had been long accustomed to consider the workers as beasts of burden, to be pushed around at will, kicked or thrown out if they displeased them. beings of whom it was laughable to speak as having human rights. And the workers themselves, usually coming from the poorest of the poor in the neighboring villages, who had been browbeaten and poverty-ridden from childhood, had patiently borne those outrages, to which they had become conditioned by hard knocks since their earliest years. Occasionally, it is true, by some strange alchemy there survived among them strong, unbowed characters like the Basarab brothers, but they were rare, and the Borislav bosses hated them for their unsubmitiveness and sharp tongues. But now suddenly everything began to change. Even those humblest of workers, the boys and the girls, who hitherto could be imposed upon and called down without any qualms whatever, instead

of pulling long faces, crying and pleading, began to talk back sharply and threateningly. And what was most strange was that in the barracks, where formerly each one suffered, toiled and worried by himself, by some magic friendship was born, and the idea of all for one and one for all took root. This friendship was born of the constant, lively exchange of ideas, the feeling for one's own hard lot strengthened and elevated by the feeling for the hard lot of others . . .

This important transformation took place among the Borislav workers with unexpected rapidity. Even our brethren themselves, who had provided the initial impulse for that transformation, were amazed to hear how loudly their words echoed throughout Borislav. Even the most sceptical of them, those who looked with misgivings on the alterations made in the aims and the work of the fraternity, even the Basarab brothers, noting how avidly the oil workers were picking up their words and repeating them in their own way, began to get into the new movement with greater gusto. They saw that Benedyo and Stasyura spoke the truth when they advocated that they broaden out from their previously tight little circle and carry their message and ideas to the widest public, and now they were convinced that the soil was well prepared among the people for sowing this message, and that not only would the message not lose everything by being spread publicly, but to the contrary, it would gather strength thereby. So far as that goes, the Basarab brothers, and in their wake others of the more stubborn Brethren, didn't necessarily accept everything that Benedyo said, but figured that if Benedyo's advice shouldn't pan out (even yet they had little faith in its success), it would be possible to turn the entire tremendous power of the disappointed workers' mass to other deeds, those for which the fraternity was originally organized . . .

But what life, what commotion there now was in that tiny house on the edge of Borislav where Matiy and Benedyo lived. Each evening the Brethren would come, two or three at a time, and report how matters were progressing, how the

oil workers were taking in their words, how they were seeking advice, how they were standing up to the bosses. The conversations would often last a long time and the road along which they must travel became ever clearer to our friends. At the very first, when they had just decided to recruit a broad section of the Borislav workers into their society, they had conferred for two whole evenings on how to start working so as to gain their ends the easiest way and at the same time not to call attention to themselves prematurely. At that time the persecution and arrests of the Poles who had taken part in the 1863 uprising was still fresh in the people's memory, and some of the Brethren expressed the fear that, if they were exposed, the police would come down on them and charge them with some sort of rebellion, in which case all their labours would have been for nothing. At last Benedyo suggested this advice: at the very first they should pass their ideas on persistently, but as though from the side, accidentally, bit by bit, every time a conversation took place, awakening in all of the workers a consciousness of their bad, wretched conditions, and at the same time pointing out the possibility of remedying them in the future. In this way, said Benedyo, unrest, irritation and a desire for remedial action would grow among the people, and a tension would arise among the masses of oilworkers, which, if cleverly supported and built up, could be transformed into action quickly and with great power at the appropriate moment. All the Brethren liked that advice and they pledged themselves to act on it. Before two weeks were out, the whole purpose seemed to have been practically completely achieved. After work the workers walked about Borislav in mobs, talking noisily and discussing; the inns were becoming more and more empty, while unrest among the people kept mounting. The impatient Brethren began to assert ever more loudly that the time had arrived to come out in the open and assume leadership of the broad labour movement. But Benedyo, and along with him the Basarab brothers, insisted that it was necessary to wait a while longer, until the

tide of the workers' anger rose higher and became more stormy.

And that tide, moved by actual poverty and oppression and ably assisted by the painfully-truthful words of the Brethren, rose ever higher and beat ever more angrily. The common man is the enemy of all protracted thinking and deliberation. It is true that with his own mind he reaches a clear and decisive conclusion only slowly, but when it has settled and become clear in his head, forming a final, hard and bright image in it, then he wants no playing around, no deliberations, but with all the power of his being he presses to put that idea into action, and then a battle between him and his enemies is inevitable. That's how it was here. You would think that it's not a big thing for a man who daily suffers poverty and injury to become conscious of that poverty and injury, and yet how long it took the Borislav workers to gain that consciousness! And you would think, what is there so special about that consciousness, which of itself was sad and hopeless? And yet what unrest it caused, what a storm it raised in the heads of all the workers! And soon, out of the feeling of hopelessness and despair, there was born grim determination, co-operation among themselves, and insubordination to those who were doing them harm.

From words they began to go over to deeds. One day the news spread throughout Borislav that in one place the workers had messed up a time-keeper in a back alley when he had attempted to collect four cents time-keeper's fee per 12-hour shift instead of the usual two cents. This news was like a signal for many other similar events quickly to follow. With every news of such a happening the determination and courage of the oilworkers became greater. They began to warn the time-keepers, foremen and superintendents to their faces that they wouldn't stand for any more bullying. The human leeches of all sorts began to get scared.

One day the rumour flew about Borislav that when one foreman inflicted an unjust fine on an oilworker and the timekeeper tried to take it out of his wages on pay day, the

oilworkers raised a great noise and rumpus at the pay wicket, demanding that the foreman be brought there to explain why he inflicted such a fine on their mate. The foreman had hidden somewhere, so in order to get rid of them, the timekeeper said jokingly: "Go and find him, and when you do, bring him here by the ear!" The oilworkers scattered to all sides with loud whoops and soon they found the foreman and began to push him about and they finally dragged him to the pay station by force, actually by the ears. Naturally, he was bruised, scratched and his ear lobes were torn. Several oilworkers were arrested and locked in the town jail. This news caused great noise and commotion . . . That very evening, led by the Basarab brothers, a great mob of oilworkers went to the Borislav mayor and got him to agree to let all the arrested men go free. Happy laughter swept the workers. Songs and challenges rang out on the streets of Borislav. The released men were taken from inn to inn, treated to drinks and questioned a thousands times about how they had led the foreman by the ears to the pay station.

While workers, intoxicated with happiness, made merry on the streets of Borislav, in Matiy's shanty the Brethren were sitting and discussing what to do next. All were agreed that the time had come for action.

"Let's call a meeting! Call a meeting!" they all said.

And they decided to call a meeting of all the oilworkers on the green but without giving away their society. The gathering was to take place on Sunday after mass.

Next day the hitherto unheard words leaped like lightning from lips to lips, from well to well, from barracks to barracks and from oil works to oil works:

"On Sunday after mass! On the green near Borislav! Meeting, meeting, meeting!"

No one knew what sort of meeting it was to be, what it would consider, or who called it. Nobody even asked. But all felt that this was the great moment, that much would depend on it — and all placed great though vague hopes on that moment. Meeting! Meeting! Meeting! That word,

like a charm, lit up withered and weary faces, gave strength to calloused hands and straightened up long-bowed spines. Meeting! Our meeting! — the message spread both aloud and in whispers to all the corners, and thousands of hearts beat with impatience, waiting for Sunday and the meeting to come.

\* \* \*

A storm was gathering over Borislav, not from the skies to the earth, but from the earth to the skies.

Threatening clouds were gathering on the barren stretch of land that served as the green for Borislav: that was the oilworkers coming together for their great workingmen's assembly. All were aroused by this new, hitherto unknown phenomenon, all were filled with hope and yet with a secret fear, all were as one in their wrath and hatred of their oppressors. Noisily, and silently, in large groups and small, from the upper end of the town and from the lower — and from the centre — they flowed in streams and rivers. In black, oil-smeared kaftans, leibiks, siraks and hunyas, belted with leather thongs or strings, their faces pallid, yellowish and greenish, under tattered and oil-spotted caps, hats, army "holtzmitzes," felt Boyko hats and foothills straws — they covered the green like a thick, dirty, grey cloud, pressing together and swaying like waves, making a noise like an approaching flood.

"What's there to talk about?" one group was shouting. "It's all clear: the Jews have cornered the earth, they won't let us live, they have brought famine to the people!"

"We've got to get together and not give in, but stand up for ourselves!" came shouts from another group.

"It's fine for you to say we shouldn't give in. But when you're hungry and you haven't a job, you'll put your tail between your legs and give in to anything!"

Hunger was the sore word. Like a nightmare it hovered behind one's shoulder. At the mention of hunger, the loud, bold cries died down.

"Throw every one who mistreats us into the oil wells!" they were shouting at the other end.

"What good will that do?" old Stasyura was calming them down. "First of all, whoever throws somebody else into the well is bound to rot in prison . . ."

"Hoho, who knows if he will," Matiy said sadly. "The thief Mortko threw my Ivanchik in and even took his money, and he's walking the earth today and laughing at Christian folk!"

"Secondly," continued Stasyura, "a hundred may cheat us, but there's a thousand skinning us according to the law, so that you can't rightly even call it mistreatment; they are polite and nice to you: take what's coming to you, they say — and yet a man knows he's being skinned alive. That's our trouble!"

"That's true, that's true!" the oilworkers cried.

"As to that," others chimed in, "there'll be no cure for that, probably."

"Why no cure?" asked Stasyura. "There's a herb to cure every kind of illness, you've only to find the right one. How could it be that there should be no cure for our ills? We've got to find it. We have gathered here today, a big crowd, glory be, just to talk it over. As you know, a crowd is a powerful man. Where a single individual can't get anywhere with his one brain, the whole community will soon find a way out."

"God grant that we reach a conclusion today," the oilworkers said. "The time is long overdue, and poverty is gnawing us to the bone already."

Such and similar talks were going on at all corners and in every group. The Brethren separated and were everywhere preparing the people for their way of thinking, inspiring them with confidence in the possibility of improvement and reform, strengthening their faith in the community brains and community power. Meanwhile, new crowds kept coming and coming. The sun already reached the middle

of the sky and beat down unmercifully, raising thick, stinking, suffocating oil clouds over Borislav . . .

"Well, it's time to get going, start the meeting — everybody's here already!" workers spoke up from all sides.

"Whoever has anything to say, let him come here to the centre and stand on this rock!" Andrus Basarab said in his powerful ringing voice.

"Gather around, make a space around the rock," the oil-workers called, moving up to the centre.

Benedyó climbed on the rock. He wasn't accustomed to speak to such a large crowd and was somewhat confused. He twisted his cap in his hands and looked about on all sides.

"Who's this?" oil workers shouted from all sides.

"A labouring man, a bricklayer," said Benedyó.

"Well, then, say what you have to say!"

"I haven't much to say," said Benedyó, growing somewhat bolder. "I only wanted to say right off what everybody knows without me saying it. We working folk are in a bad plight. We work hard: we never have a good night's sleep, we have no time to rest during the day, we're growing callouses on our hands — new ones come on before the old ones go away — and what do we get out of it? They say that if you work bitter, you'll eat sweet, but do we get to eat much sweet? We earn our pay by bitter toil, that's true, but our living is even more bitter. We faint more from hunger than we know what it is to have a square meal. And at least if they didn't mistreat us, insult us, and pour indignity on us at every step! You can see for yourselves how much respect we get. They think more of an animal than they do of a labouring man!"

"He speaks the truth, it's the truth! They care more for cattle, for dogs, than they do for poor folk! Hey, hey, does God see all this?"

"And what is more," continued Benedyó, "whom are we working for, who profits from our labour? . . . The owners! The poor oilworker stays six or eight or twelve hours at a time in the stinking, suffocating hole, he goes through

agonies, pounding and digging drifts underground, other workers stand at the crank in the mill and turn until the brains in their heads are spinning and the last bit of strength is sucked out of them, while the owners sell the wax and the oil, and rake in thousands, and they're the masters, they build themselves mansions of brick, they dress up and ride about in their carriages and splash mud on the poor folk! Nor do you ever hear a good word from them. That's who we work for and that's the gratitude we get for it!"

"God punish them for our toil and our poverty," shouted oilworkers on all sides.

"Well, as to that, that's so," Benedyo continued after a brief pause to catch his breath. "let God punish them, of course. But it's still unknown whether God will punish them or not, and then, who knows whether it'll be any the easier for us if God does punish them? The way it is, it seems as though God prefers to punish us more than them! Take the present time, God has punished our villages with famine, while here in Borislav the bosses have undertaken to punish us too: they're cutting wages every week and if anyone dares to complain, they jeer at him to his face: 'Get out if you're not satisfied,' they say, 'I can get a dozen to take your job at the same pay.' So figure it out for yourselves whether reliance on God's punishment is going to help us any! I think that it's best to do as our people say: appeal to God, but roll up your sleeves. God's punishment is God's punishment, but we must get together and figure out how we're to get out of our troubles through our own efforts."

"Ha, there's the rub! How are we to get out of them, since we're poor and can get no help from anywhere?" workers shouted.

"Well, I can't give you a recipe for that," Benedyo replied, "but if it's your will to listen, I would like to tell you what my ideas are on that score."

"Talk, talk! We're listening!" the oilworkers buzzed.

"Well, if I'm to speak, I'll speak. You say the truth, that there's no use waiting for help from anybody, because who

will help a poor workingman today? And even if somebody did help one out, still he couldn't help us all, such a big crowd. Only we ourselves, through united effort, can help ourselves."

"We ourselves? How's that?" sceptical voices were heard.

"It's true," said Benedyo, "that right now we are in no position to help ourselves. What kind of help can there be when a man is not working for himself, when he works and works, but someone else profits from his labour? So long as all our labour doesn't go to our own benefit, so long we won't have complete good. But at least we can help ourselves a bit. Just look, how often it happens that a man is unemployed! That man walks about as though he had sunstroke, he dashes here and there as though in a fever, but he can't get a job. When such a man is fainting from hunger already, he goes and begs for any kind of a job, even the worst kind, only not to starve to death. Well, you see, if we, all of us here, took upon ourselves the obligation to pay, let us say, a cent every week after pay, then figure out yourselves what that would amount to. If there were a thousand of us, none of us would miss a cent much from his pocket, but every week we would have a large enough sum to help a dozen people in case of misfortune."

"That's true, that's true!" the workers cried.

"That wouldn't be a great help, of course," Benedyo continued, "but it wouldn't be so very small, either. Because, if a man can be tided over for a while by a rinsky or a rinsky and a half, then he won't have to go and scrape and beg for work at any kind of miserable wages, and so he won't be driven to lower the wages of other workers. And the sum that is given him, well, he can pay it off bit by bit when he gets a better job. In this way our workers' treasury wouldn't grow less, but on the contrary, it would keep getting bigger."

The oilworkers stood in silence, thinking it over. At first glance it looked like a worthwhile proposition, and they were all ready to start at once. But soon objections were heard.

“Bah, what good will that do?” some oilworkers were saying. “Supposing we agree and begin making our contributions, who’s going to gain from it? It will be the same as in those villages where they have community fund pools. The rich borrow the money and profit by it, while the poor man must pay his mite, but gets no benefit from it. Or take another angle. We’ll elect a treasurer, an oilworker like the rest of us, naturally, but who’s to guarantee that he won’t take the dough and skedaddle?”

Benedyo heard these objections out calmly.

“I thought about that, too, and here’s the conclusion I came to. First of all, there’s no danger that only the rich will benefit from our money, because there are no rich among us — we’re all poor. Secondly, we’re not moneylenders, we won’t lend our money out at interest, we’ll only give it in cases of real need, illness or unemployment, that is, we’ll help only where every one can see that help is needed. Whoever will later be in a position to do so, will pay the money back, and if some won’t be able to, well, we won’t hang them. And as to the treasurer, here’s what it would be best to do. If there will be many of us joining the pool, let the men themselves elect a treasurer in each barracks or for several neighboring barracks, some one who is working steady here in Borislav and whom they know well. Such a treasurer would collect money only from those barracks that elected him. Knowing how many of their people are working and the number that undertook to contribute, every one could very easily figure out how much money the treasurer has in the treasury. And if they aren’t satisfied, they can always elect another. All those barracks that have a treasurer of their own would be obliged to assist the needy ones in their own midst, and they would know best who needs help and how much.”

“Now, that’s talking,” the workers agreed. “That way the treasurer will always be where we’ll be able to keep an eye on him. And if there’ll be a lot of them, each will have only a small sum in his possession, and the temptation to engage

in monkey business won't be so strong. And even if the money were lost, it wouldn't be much of a loss. We can agree to that."

"Allow me, that isn't the end yet," said Benedyo. "Who knows, maybe there will arise a need for assistance for which the treasury of one barracks won't be big enough. Maybe something will have to be done of a nature to promote the welfare of all Borislav workers — and for that we'll need more money, a bigger treasury. I suggest we do this. Let us divide all the money that will be coming into each one of these local treasuries in the barracks or several barracks into three parts. Two of those parts should remain in the barracks for local assistance, and the other third should be given into a main, central treasury. Neither the treasurer nor any single barracks could pay out any money from that treasury, only the full meeting of Borislav workers, those that contribute to the fund, of course. Only a minimum of money should be taken out of it. It should be built up for a greater common need."

"What sort of need could that possibly be?" asked the oil-workers.

"Here's how I see it," said Benedyo. "As you see, the bosses have now concluded very strongly that there are many of us, and that famine will keep driving more and more workers to Borislav, so they don't care whether we can manage or not, they continually keep cutting our wages. And they won't stop cutting them until we put up a case on our behalf."

"Eh, as though we haven't done it, but what good does it do?"

"Wait, let me say how we should put up our case! Of course, it's no good to talk to them, either politely or with threats, for they won't listen. What we must do is not to threaten, but to do something that will hit them so hard they won't know where it came from. Here's what we should do. Let us all, as many of us as there are here, and those who aren't here also, let every one of us one morning, each on

his job, stand up and say: 'Enough! We're not going to work, we can't work for such small wages, we'd rather stay home. We won't move a finger until our wages are raised.' And having said that, everybody go home!"

The oilworkers' jaws dropped with astonishment at this advice.

"But . . . how's that? . . . to leave the job?"

"For a while, only for a while, until they give better pay."

"But that might last a long time."

"Well, it can't last too long. Look here, the bosses have signed contracts with various merchants to deliver so much wax and so much oil to them by such and such a date, and if they don't deliver the goods on time, they stand to lose ten times more than the raise in wages we're after. You may be sure that they won't go down into the wells themselves. They'll hold out for a few days, maybe, and then they'll have to come to us 'cap in hand.'"

"But they'll bring in other workers from the outside!"

"We'll just have to see that they don't. We should send out our men to all the villages in the vicinity and make it known: 'Let no one come to Borislav during such-and-such a time because so-and-so is taking place there.'"

"And if they bring in Mazurs?"

"We must not let them in! Whether we do it with words or with force, we must not let them in."

"Hmmm, it could be done. But how are we to live while we're out of work?"

"That's why I think we should build up that main treasury."

"But it'll take a tremendous sum of money to feed such a crowd of people!"

"During the time when there's no work we can send a part of the people to the villages or to the cities, to other factories or something, so the load should be lighter. And then, we shouldn't rush into such a big action until we have enough money to hold out at least a week. And before we begin, we'll have to fix everything properly, send out our

people to the villages, get in a supply of bread and such. But there'll be lots of time yet to talk about that. Now you should have your say about whether you agree to the proposition that we should have treasuries: both local treasuries and a main one."

"Agreed! Agreed!"

"And do you agree also that two-thirds should remain in the local treasuries and one-third should go to the main treasury?"

"No, let two-thirds go to the main treasury! We would rather pay two cents dues, if only some improvement will come more quickly for us all!"

"I would propose that we elect an executive of three to take charge of the main treasury, people whom you know well and can trust. The main thing is that the treasury should be in the hands of a man who has some property here."

"But where'll we find such a person, since we're all folks who came here from the outside and we're all poor?"

"I know such a man, old Matiy, who has a house of his own here. In my opinion it would be best to keep the treasury in his place. And it should be kept in such a way that every local treasurer could come at any time and count the money that's in the treasury and find out where it came from, and report to his own people on it. The other two executive members would have the job of making the rounds of the barracks every week and collecting the money. That way it would be a greater guaranty that no one is cheating anybody or pocketing any of the money. Do you agree to that?"

"We agree! We agree!"

"Where's that Matiy? We want to see him!" shouted some of those who didn't know Matiy. Matiy climbed up on the rock and bowed to the crowd.

"Who are you?" they shouted to him.

"I'm an oilworker, good people."

"You have a house of your own?"

"It's mine and not mine, but more mine than not. It be-

longs to my daughter-in-law, but she's away in service and doesn't live here."

"Do you agree to keep the treasury and to be responsible to us for it?"

"I'll be as responsible to you as I am to God and to my conscience. If such is your will, I'm ready to serve the community. And anyway, about half of you people know me."

"We know him!" many voices rang out. "You can depend on him!"

"Whom shall we elect as the other two treasurers?" the oilworkers asked.

"Choose people you know," said Benedyo, "and also the sort that can get around."

"How about you?"

"No, I can't. I'm not well, as you can see, and I'm too busy at work. I wouldn't be able to run around. I'll do what I can without being elected."

And at this juncture Benedyo thanked the crowd for listening to him and climbed down from the rock. The oilworkers crowded about Benedyo, shaking his hand, looking into his face and thanking him for his good advice with loud, sincere words.

The workers, meantime, quickly agreed to elect Priydevolya and Sen Basarab as the other two executive members.

"Thanks for your confidence!" Sen Basarab hollered to the crowd. "We will try to serve our common cause well! And now, whoever is able, please throw in a cent or two apiece, so that our treasury shouldn't be empty!"

"Hurrah! A cent apiece into the treasury!" shouted the workers.

"Put in one cent apiece, and let everyone do it," said Matiy. "That way, when we count the money, we'll know how many of us there are here!"

All agreed and when all the money was collected, there were counted 35 rinskys.

"There are three and a half thousand of us gathered here!" shouted Sen Basarab. "There are thirty-five rinskys in the

treasury! And it wasn't hard for us to get such a sum together!"

"What a power a crowd has," the oilworkers said to one another. "Somebody put it neatly, that if a whole community should spit at one time, it would drown an individual!"

The din grew louder, but this was no longer the morose, frightened noise of a downhearted and hopeless mass — it was the joyous hum of bees, for whom Spring has also come, for whom the flowers are blooming, and in whose breasts the hope for a happier life has awakened.

\* \* \*

The workers gathered about Benedyo in the yard of the new factory. They were waiting for Leon, the owner, to get the rest of the pay that was coming to them and to thank him for having employed them. The moon rose in the serene sky, while here and there golden stars peeped mistily through wisps of white, semi-transparent fog. The workers seated themselves on rocks and cut-off ends of wooden beams and talked. The dull echo of their conversation travelled to the fields and became intermingled with the silvery whispers of the brook that babbled over the stones. The talk, naturally, was of one thing — the recent workers' meeting, the collections and future expectations.

"I'll tell you the truth," Benedyo said, "a miracle has happened to the people here. When I came to Borislav a little more than a month ago and began to enquire whether they had ever tried to help themselves, every one would either shake his head or laugh at me. But today you yourselves see how all of them, old and young alike, are rushing to pay their dues. Why, we've already got 150 rinskys in the mean treasury alone!"

"One hundred and fifty rinskys," repeated one of the workmen, "well, what of it? It would really be something for one man, but what does it mean for so many thousands of people?"

"That's true, it doesn't mean much," said Benedyo, "but

don't forget that a week hasn't gone by yet since we started collecting. In a month's time we should have at least five hundred."

"And can we start what you have planned with five hundred?"

"Hmm, we'll have to make a good estimate of the people, and the money," said Benedyo. "If you figure just a rinsky and a half to keep a man for a week, and further, that the workless period will last a week, then even if we only have to feed a thousand men during that time, we'll need at least fifteen hundred rinskys in the treasury. I say 'at least' because apart from feeding the people there'll be other expenditures."

"Fifteen hundred rinskys!" the workers cried out together. "Merciful God, when will we collect such a sum! By that time half of us will have starved to death, and tens of thousands of new folk will drift in from the villages!"

"What can we do?" Benedyo said sadly. "We can't go after higher dues because the bosses are cutting the pay at every step as it is, and when they learn of our collection, they'll cut it still more. We must just stick to it, collect and suffer, even if it takes three months!"

\* \* \*

Several weeks went by . . . The Brethren gathered in Matiy's house for a conference. What was to be done? The people were getting restless. Why isn't the signal being given, why isn't something started, why is nothing being done? The people were beginning to grow dispirited. The dues were beginning to drop off . . . In the villages the hunger eased up a bit, but the harvest was so poor that the people had never seen one like it, even in the leanest of years . . . The people would soon begin to converge on Borislav again in greater numbers than ever. If something was to be started, now was the best time, because it was easiest to keep the people in the villages from coming to Borislav, and it would even be possible to send the larger part of the Borislav people to the villages for two to three

weeks, where they could manage to survive better while they weren't working . . .

They began to discuss what to do. It was clear that there was no time to call a general workers' meeting, because it would give warning to the bosses, while the war must break out suddenly, without warning, so as to stun and confuse them, for only under such circumstances could victory be expected. Therefore, all news would have to be passed on to the workers quietly, without fanfare, preferably through special couriers and the local treasurers. They, too, would have to be consulted about the bringing of food into Borislav, and also which of the workers should and could be sent out of Borislav for the period of the struggle. That would have to be voluntary, of course, and every one who agreed to leave Borislav should be given something for the road. They should leave slowly, day by day, in small groups, and they would have to figure out various pretexts. It was decided to rent grain storage bins to store food in the neighboring villages of Popeli, Banya, Bubichi, and Tustanovichi, and that a workers' guard would also be placed to watch over them. It was decided to send out twenty men immediately to go to the villages and announce to the people not to come to Borislav for several weeks, until the workers there had won a better wage for themselves and for everybody. Matiy and Sen Basarab were to go as soon as possible, even the next day, to Drohobich to buy bread. Matiy knew a baker there and he hoped that through him it would be possible to order, without any hubbub and without arousing suspicions, as large a supply of bread as would be needed, and to transport at least the greater part of these supplies during the week before the outbreak, in the casks and cases in which large loads of wax and oil were usually transported. In this way all of the preparations could be made quickly and without attracting attention, and in this lay the greatest guarantee of success, because the bosses would be convinced of the workers' power and how well their undertaking was organized, while the workers, feeling themselves shielded from

hunger and want, would gather boldness and assurance. Andrus Basarab and Derkach were also to go to the neighboring villages and visit farmers they knew there (the Basarab brothers hailed from Banya, the closest village to Borislav, and they knew many farmers in the surrounding villages) in order to rent suitable storage buildings. All the other Brethren were to remain in Borislav and see that everything went smoothly and that the bosses didn't learn too soon of the workers' intentions.

Since it was Sunday and the meeting finished quite early, the Brethren dispersed to call the local treasurers over and to discuss the matter with them. Matiy's shanty was busy until late at night, and yellowish and ruddy faces kept flashing in the poorly lighted windows until at last, long after midnight, they all went home. Under cover of darkness Borislav was already long fast asleep, only somewhere, far beyond Novy Svit, was heard the hoarse singing of a band of workmen in an inn where they were drinking:

*Because I'm drinking, my darling, don't you cry,  
There'll be time enough for weeping when I die!*

\* \* \*

The calm remained in Borislav for another week. For a week yet the bosses walked the streets without a worry, looked after their deals, bargained, cheated, took money in and paid it out, busied themselves with current affairs. The workers, too, went about tattered, bent and smeared with oil as before, and they crawled down into the wells as before, turned the cranks and ate dry bread and onions, rarely tasting warm food, but taking more whisky for that. It's true that there were no more of those loud, noisy, senseless drinking bouts now and mobs of people did not spend hours in the inns as before, but the innkeepers, who were usually also owners of oil wells, didn't complain on this account very much, because the weather was hot, the work had been speeded up to fill orders for wax that poured in from all sides, and a sober workman could always be relied

on to do more than a drunken one. Life flowed on like a shallow and muddy stream, and it seemed as though it would flow like that forever. And yet this was the last week!

The preparations for the workers' war were quickly being completed. The Basarab brothers supervised the transportation of the bread, millet meal and other food they bought in Drohobich to their secret warehouses in Bubichi, Banya and Tustanovichi, where also farmers had been hired to deliver given amounts of food to Borislav. Three large boilers were also purchased, to cook porridge in for the workers. The Brethren also didn't forget to acquire canvas for tents to house the homeless if any workers were evicted from their quarters. By Saturday everything was ready and the glad and at the same time disturbing whisper passed through all the barracks: "The time has come! It's time! It's time!" It was like a light summer breeze blowing across a field of ripe grain: the silent, bowed stalks bow lower yet, then lift themselves, then bend again, waving in unison, while the spikes, full of promise, whisper quietly at first and then ever more boldly: "It's time! It's time! It's time!"

The workers' envoys sped along twenty roads out of Borislav to the towns and villages, spreading the tidings about the new war. They were seen in Urovi and Pidbuzha, in Hayi and Dobrivlyani, in Strey and Metinichi, in Sambir and Turka, in Stara Sol and Dzvinyach, in Dobrohostiv and in Korchin. The poor heard their message with joy, the rich with jeers and scepticism. In some places they were wined and dined, and in others they were asked for their passports and threatened with arrest, but they were not deterred and went farther and farther, without missing a single settlement, begging and arguing that no one should go for work to Borislav for a few weeks until the battle was finished. Thousands of rumours spread through the villages about that war, confused and terrifying stories, such as great want and utter hopelessness usually give birth to. It was said that the Borislav workers intended to kill all the Jews, or again that they were out to drive the bosses out of Borislav. These

rumours also reached the gendarmes and they began to dart about the villages, now threatening and now calming down the people, and they tried to run these rumours to earth. Twenty similar reports were received by the authorities in Drohobich about mysterious persons who were supposed to be propagating Communist principles in the villages. The authorities got frightened and ordered them apprehended, but before this official correspondence reached its destination, the oilworkers were already back in Borislav, after rousing three or four counties with their message. The gendarmes went about the villages for a long time after this, picking up students on their holidays and travelling city workers, never dreaming that there could be "Communist agents" in homespun, oil-smearred shirts, or that these very same agents often calmly walked past them.

At last the preparations were finished and the war began on Sunday. The first important step was to send the larger part of the workers, among them all timid and sickly ones, and many women and youngsters, out of Borislav en masse that very Sunday. The Brethren had originally wanted this departure, so necessary to the complete success of their plans, to take place quietly, without any noise, in small groups, so that the enemy should not quickly figure out where it was leading to. At first Benedyo himself had been of that opinion, but later, thinking it over and over again, he came to the conclusion that if this was to be war, then let it come out in the open, and let its first step, made loudly and with the necessary dash, from the very beginning inspire considerable fear among the bosses and weaken their spirits. That was why he insisted that the "exodus from Egyptian slavery" should take place in the middle of the day, en masse and openly. The "holiday" was to begin tomorrow morning anyway, so why not let the bosses know today which way the wind was blowing?

After mass on Sunday the streets of Borislav began to be filled in an unaccustomed way with working men and women. The din was like it is on market day, as more and

more workers gathered together. Half of them had sacks over their shoulders, parcels in their arms and all their clothes on their backs.

The people flowed like a river down the streets, quiet and somewhat melancholy. Outside of Borislav, on the green, other groups were already waiting. They began to say farewell to each other.

“Good-by, comrades! May God grant that your undertaking is successful! Let us know what happens here!”

“Good-bye! We’ll soon meet again in happier circumstances!”

Slowly the mass of workers split up and wound their way in all directions, to the mountains and to the valleys, to the forests and to the plains, looking back from time to time at the Borislav they were leaving, while Borislav dozed calmly in the sun . . .

Early next morning some of the work places were completely empty. The overseers came, unlocked the gates and wondered why the workers didn’t come. Some grew angry and cursed, while others, more phlegmatic by nature, sat down on their benches by the entrances, promising themselves to beat the mugs of the dirty idlers for such unprecedented lateness. But neither the one nor the other availed them anything. The sun had already risen high in the sky and still the workers did not appear. The overseers would, perhaps, have waited, bored and irritable, for some time yet if shouts and curses from neighboring work places had not told them that, although in those places there were workers about like hornets near a hive, something unusual, something bad and impossible was nevertheless taking place. And yet it was a simple thing. The workers had come in full strength to those work places and silently waited for the overseer at the doors. When the overseer came and unlocked the door, the workers remained standing and silent, and didn’t enter.

“Come on to work!” the overseer shouted.



"Oh, we've got lots of time," one or another oilworkers answered coolly.

"What do you mean, you've got time?" shouted the overseer. "I haven't got time to dally!"

"Then crawl into the well and do the work yourself, if you're in such a hurry," the workers shouted, guffawing with laughter.

The overseer turned blue with anger and clenched his fists, ready to smash them into the nearest face.

"Don't get angry, Shloma," the workers calmed him down. "We only came here to inform you that we're not going to work any more!"

"You won't work?" the stunned overseer mumbled. "And why not?"

"Firstly, because we don't want such a cur as you for an overseer, and secondly, because they don't pay us enough. Good-bye! And tell your master that if he gives us a better overseer and pays us six shustkas per day, we'll return to work."

And this took place simultaneously, unanimously, on all the jobs throughout all of Borislav!



## PART OF OUR TRADITION

To the half-million Ukrainians in Canada (as to those in the United States, Argentina, Brazil and other lands to which they migrated) Ivan Franko has a special meaning. He was there when they or their fathers left their homeland and he sorrowfully saw them go; to his dying day he kept contact with them and wished them well. And the Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada with Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko in their hearts and on their lips. They helped them to survive in difficult conditions, they succored them in their terrible homesickness and loneliness on the homesteads or on railroad "extra gangs," they taught them to keep their dignity and to find friends in their struggles despite all insults and discrimination (the word "Galician" was used on par with the foulest of curse names at one time), and they gave them faith in themselves and in the future. That is why they gave their societies, libraries and circles from the earliest days the names of Shevchenko and Franko.

In his native land Ivan Franko is universally read and honoured. The University in Lvov, where he was once forbidden to teach, now bears his name. His works are published in millions of copies. They are translated into many languages. He is slowly becoming known also in the English-speaking countries. But in our own country that process of assimilation should be warmer and more rapid because a considerable section of the Canadian people, the Ukrainian Canadians, have brought him directly with them into the stream of Canadian culture and Canadian life.

In that sense he is also part of our Canadian tradition.

—JOHN WEIR

