

TARAS SHEVCHENKO

SONG OUT OF  
DARKNESS

Indeed, in those two poems the poet painted the picture of a great Realm, that of Russia, *that Realm of Darkness* which oppresses Ukraine. . . .

IVAN FRANKÓ, 1881.

SELECTED POEMS  
translated from the Ukrainian

by

VERA RICH

THE memory of Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), Ukraine's greatest poet, is being honoured throughout the world in this Centenary Year. He is unique in the republic of letters in being the only poet whose work has shaped the history of a people, for Ukraine; the second greatest force in the Soviet Union, owes her revival as a distinct nation almost entirely to him. As a poet of striking force, beauty and originality, and a great humanist and champion of liberty for all peoples, his appeal is universal.

He is a "great enough poet for his fame to cross the borders of his country and spread throughout Europe" (Emile Durand, *Revue des deux mondes*, 1876).

"The esteem in which he is held by the people of the Ukraine warrants his being placed among the great revolutionary poets of Europe" (*The Times*, 18 March 1961).

"Professor Matthews, of the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, in his short but informative study of Shevchenko portrays him as a sensitive and emotional writer, able to transform his impressions into lyrical and vivid verse that is still unsurpassed in the Ukrainian language. Modern Ukrainian literature in fact begins with Shevchenko, though the older literature can be traced back to the tenth century. To Ukrainians he is not only a towering literary figure but, above all, a symbol of their national spirit and longing for freedom" (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 19 October 1951).

[Continued on the back flap]

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SHEVCHENKO CENTENARY COMMITTEE

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TARAS SHEVCHENKO

WORKS

in

English Translation

Edited

by

V. SWOBODA

VOLUME ONE

POETRY

PART I

LONDON, 1961

49 LINDEN GARDENS, W.2.

TARAS SHEVCHENKO

SONG OUT OF  
DARKNESS

SELECTED POEMS

translated from the Ukrainian

by

VERA RICH

with

Preface by PAUL SELVER

a Critical Essay by W. K. MATTHEWS

Introduction and Notes by V. SWOBODA

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

THE Shevchenko Centenary Committee in Great Britain, formed in 1960, has as one of the most important aims which it has set before itself the publishing, for the first time, of the collected works of Taras Shevchenko in English translation. The plan of the Committee is to sponsor their publication in three volumes as follows :

Volume One : Poetry ;

Volume Two : Prose ;

Volume Three : Drama ; Diary ; Correspondence.

Volume One will include new English translations of the whole of Shevchenko's poetry, which comprises 226 titles. The present selection by Vera Rich which is offered to the reader as Part 1 of Volume One contains thirty-eight poems, among which are some of Shevchenko's most important works. Further parts of Volume One will follow in due course.

The autobiographical novel *The Artist* which is being translated by Paul Selver will form Part 1 of Volume Two.

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The Editor wishes to express, on behalf of the Shevchenko Centenary Committee, his gratitude to Mrs. N. Matthews for her very kind permission to reprint the critical essay *Taras Shevchenko : the Man and the Symbol* by her late husband, W. K. Matthews, scholar, linguist, and poet, sometime Professor of Russian at the University of London.

Also grateful acknowledgement is here made to William G. Smith, George Tarnawsky, and J. T. L. Weston for permission to reprint several poems published formerly by The Venture Press, *Horizons* (U.S.A.), and *The New Poet Magazine* respectively.

Finally, the Editor sincerely thanks Paul Selver, the oldest living translator of Shevchenko, for his kindness in writing a Preface to the present book and for permission to reproduce a passage (p. xxiii below) from his forthcoming translation of *The Artist*.

V. SWOBODA  
Lecturer in Russian  
and Ukrainian

*School of Slavonic and  
East European Studies,  
University of London.*



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

I WOULD like to express my thanks to all those who, by their help and encouragement, have made these translations possible. Any work of this nature depends, necessarily, on many others than the translator,—so that, sometimes, the translator feels that, with so many to thank, his own contribution to the work seems hardly significant. Without such people, the translator's task would be increased a hundredfold, and it is to them that I would now offer my grateful thanks :

Firstly, to the Shevchenko Centenary Committee in Great Britain, for making the publication of my work possible ;

To Mr. Wolodymyr Mykula, for his invaluable assistance in checking, at every stage, what may be called the artistic effect of the versions ;

To all those scholars, Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian, who have generously placed at my disposal their knowledge of Shevchenkiana, in particular to Professor P. Zaytsev, whose help in the critical early stages was invaluable ;

To all those people, known and unknown, who unconsciously, in their everyday conversation, have called to my mind the exact word or turn of phrase to render a difficult passage ;

And finally, to all those concerned with the physical task of producing this book, to the Mitre Press for their patience and care with the manuscript, and to Mrs. Magdalen Rich, without whose help in typing and preparing the script of the poems for publication this book could not have appeared on schedule.

To these and to all my grateful thanks.

VERA RICH.

*London.*

June, 1961.

## PREFACE

I HAVE read with pleasure and deep admiration Vera Rich's renderings of Shevchenko's poems. Her achievement is, both from an intellectual and an artistic point of view, of a very high order. When her translations appear in volume form they will no doubt receive favourable notices, but full justice can be done to them only by those critics who are familiar with the originals. They alone will appreciate to the full the remarkable skill with which the subtleties of Shevchenko's Ukrainian diction have been reproduced in English. How difficult a task this must have been, can be inferred from the masterly analysis of Shevchenko's poetical style which the late Professor W. K. Matthews provided in the essay with which this volume opens.

Much has been written on the art of poetical translation, too often by those who have never attempted to practise it. This accounts for the opinion sometimes expressed that poetry cannot be translated at all, except perhaps in plain prose. Such a statement has been refuted on a number of occasions in the past, and now once again by Vera Rich, most strikingly, I think, in her versions of the shorter poems, where it is easier to trace as an organic whole her verbal and metrical qualities. I single out, as a conspicuous example, the famous "Testament":

When I die, then make my grave  
High on an ancient mound,  
In my own beloved Ukraine,  
In steppeland without bound:  
Whence one may see wide-skirted wheatland,  
Dnipro's steep-cliffed shore,  
There whence one may hear the blustering  
River wildly roar.

Till from Ukraine to the blue sea  
It bears in fierce endeavour  
The blood of foemen—then I'll leave  
Wheatland and hills forever:  
Leave all behind, soar up until  
Before the throne of God  
I'll make my prayer. For till that hour  
I shall know naught of God.

Make my grave there—and arise,  
Sundering your chains,  
Bless your freedom with the blood  
Of foemen's evil veins!  
Then in that great family,  
A family new and free,  
Do not forget, with good intent  
Speak quietly of me.

Nearly fifty years ago I translated the same poem, my rendering of which, as an interesting literary parallel, I venture to quote here :

When I'm dead then let me slumber  
Underneath a mound,  
'Mid the rolling steppe, with precious  
Ukraine earth around;  
That the mighty girth of acres,  
Dnieper's craggy shores,  
I may gaze on, and may hearken  
How the blusterer roars.

When it bears away from Ukraine  
To the azure sea  
Foemen's blood,—then I'll depart from  
Mountain-side and lea:  
These unheeding, I'll be speeding  
Even unto God,  
There to pray, but till that happen,  
I'll know naught of God.

Grant me burial, then uprising,  
Shatter every gyve;  
Drench with evil blood of foemen  
Freedom that it thrive.  
And my name in your great kindred,  
Kindred free and new,  
Ye shall cherish, lest it perish,—  
Speak me fair and true.

PAUL SELVER.

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## TARAS SHEVCHENKO :

### THE MAN AND THE SYMBOL

#### I

PERSONALITY and reputation are not commensurate terms, for although they are obviously connected, the connection between them is not organic. A man may be greater or less than his reputation, and his reputation may grow or diminish in harmony with the fluctuating fashions of thought. Essentially a man's reputation is not a projection of his personality, as the branch is of the tree, but rather a reflection, like his image in a mirror, and this being so, it is determined by the nature of the reflecting surface—here the human environment—which is clearly subject to the influence of place and time. The career of Taras Shevchenko illustrates all these things, except the ebb of a reputation, for in the ninety years since his death his fame has grown unabated with the turbulent growth of Ukrainian self-consciousness. To-day he is still the symbol of his country's unslaked passion for freedom from tyranny in all its forms as he once became in the first flush of youthful ardour.

Ukrainian literature in its modern sense begins almost with Shevchenko in the first half of the 19th century, although its recorded beginnings go back to the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet and of Old Bulgarian literature at Kyiv in the 10th. The modern phase is represented before Shevchenko by Ivan Kotlyarevs'ky, whose language, unlike that of earlier Ukrainian authors, exclusively reproduces the contemporary vernacular. This was also used by another outstanding precursor of Shevchenko—Hryhoriy Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, as well as by an entire school of Kotlyarevs'ky's imitators, all of whom focused their attention on depicting Ukrainian life and manners. The careers of Shevchenko's two precursors overlap into the Romantic period, but neither had the temperament to profit by the emancipating effect of the new literary fashion. And so it fell to Shevchenko to express Romanticism, especially its later phase, in Ukrainian literature. The advent of Shevchenko was sudden and startling and carried the more responsive of his compatriots off their feet in a wave of fervent admiration. Such a poet had not been known in the Ukraine before. His vivid, singing, emotional verse, both lyrical and narrative, had a familiar ring and movement, for it was the

language of Ukrainian folk-song with its recognisable epithets, subtle stressing, and simple charm of manner. And yet it was not folk-poetry, for the poet's personality shone through the words with an unmistakable radiance, and it was the personality of a man who loved his country not only in the aureoles and heroisms of its past, but even more in its contemporary state of abject humiliation. This man moreover was acutely aware of social and national injustice and was not afraid to indict his people's enemies and to make them feel the sting and lash of his tongue. Here apparently was another Burns, yet, all in all, Shevchenko was more influential than Burns, for the latter lived and died in the Age of Enlightenment, when interest in the lot of the downtrodden was only just beginning to win the attention of serious, compassionate men.

The comparison with Burns, whom Shevchenko knew at least by repute, is instructive. Both men belonged to the peasantry and to a nationality other than the dominant one; both, as writers, were to some extent self-made; both wrote partly in the vernacular and partly in an alien literary language; both were highly emotional, impressionable, not markedly strong in character; both endured the indignity of social ostracism; and both died comparatively young. But the differences between the two poets are probably as considerable as the similarities, and perhaps the most glaring difference is that of legal status. This may appear to contradict our statement that both belonged to the peasantry. But in fact it does not. Although a man of the people, Burns was a free man, whereas Shevchenko was born a serf, who obtained his freedom only at twenty-four and only to enjoy it for nine out of the forty-seven years of his life. This is a fundamental fact in Shevchenko's biography and cannot be too often or too strongly emphasised. It set the tone of his poetry; it inclined him to identify himself with the meanest of his compatriots, who till 1861 were the chattels of mainly Polish and Russian landowners; it gave him his strong feeling for the soil of the Ukraine; and it enabled him to see clearly the social and national evils which beset his unhappy country. Shevchenko also differs from Burns in being an artist not only in words, as Burns was, but with brush and pencil. Indeed Shevchenko the artist was as widely known in his own time as Shevchenko the poet. And there is a third point in which the two poets are different: Burns's freedom was never circumscribed and marred by imprisonment, whereas Shevchenko's freedom was merely a brief interval in a life of ignominious duress.

Shevchenko, as a man of letters, was known to his contemporaries by two books of verse—"The Minstrel" (*Kobzar*) and "The Haydamaks" (*Haydamaky*). Only a small part of the first, as it is now

constituted, appeared in 1840, two years after his emancipation from serfdom by purchase through the kind offices of his Russian friends Zhukovsky and Bryullov. In content it is partly lyrical and partly narrative, while "The Haydamaks" (1841) is wholly narrative; in tone both are predominantly lyrical. Both draw on native folk-lore as well as on the Romantic balladry of Western Europe, and there is a great deal in them that comes from the poet's own experience whether direct or vicarious. Thus, for his "Haydamaks", Shevchenko made use of his grandfather's eyewitness stories of the peasant revolt of 1768 (*koliyivshchyna*), imbuing them with the vitality of passionate memory. An expanded edition of "The Minstrel" came out in 1860, and since Shevchenko's death early in the following year other writings of his have come to light. To-day his complete works include prose as well as verse, and the prose is for the most part in Russian. Although generally inferior as writing to his verse,<sup>1</sup> it has the characteristics of his literary temperament and is valuable as an autobiographical record throwing considerable light on certain periods of his life. His "Diary" (*Dnevnik*), limited to the crucial years 1857-1858, is particularly illuminating on the notable change in his psychology which was the inevitable outcome of ten physically and morally degrading years of exile in the Kazakh steppe<sup>2</sup>. His correspondence, both Ukrainian and Russian, covers a much longer period than the "Diary", and even substantial parts of his nine Russian stories (e.g. "The Artist"—*Khudozhnik*) are apparently little-modified transcripts of his own experiences, their verisimilitude being in some cases heightened by the use of actual names (e.g. Bryullov's). On the other hand his only play "Nazar Stodolya", which remained for decades in the repertory of the Ukrainian theatre, has no autobiographical significance.

The core of Shevchenko's literary art was and remains his Ukrainian verse, and the impact of this on his contemporaries and on succeeding generations is usually explained by reference to its

<sup>1</sup> S. T. Aksakov wrote to Shevchenko of the latter's Russian story "A Pleasant Stroll not without a Moral" (*Progulka s udovol'stviyem i ne bez morali*): "It is incomparably inferior to your talent as a poet. You are a lyrical poet, an elegist; your humour is not happy, your jokes not always funny. True, where you refer to nature, where you have to do with painting, everything you say is beautiful, but this does not redeem the shortcomings of the story as a whole". (See A. Beletsky, "Russkiye povesti T. G. Shevchenka" (in M. Ryf'sky i N. Ushakov [editors], Taras Shevchenko, V, Moscow, 1949).

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Ya. H. Kukharenko (22.IV.1857) Shevchenko wrote on the occasion of his release: "Ten years of duress, my only friend, have destroyed, killed off my faith and hope. And both were pure once, unspotted as a child taken from the font—pure and strong as a polished diamond. . . . But what cannot the chemical retort do?"



“national” character (*narodnist*). His poetry has been equated with Ukrainian folk-songs (*pisni*) and folk-ballads (*dumy*), because they share a common vocabulary and style. The Russian critic K. Chukovsky avers in one of his pre-revolutionary essays<sup>3</sup> that his collation of the verse of “The Minstrel” with equivalents in Maksymovych’s edition (1843) of Ukrainian folk-songs has persuaded him that there is not a line of Shevchenko’s poetry which cannot be paralleled from the folk-songs. This seems to be an exaggeration at best, although there can be no doubt that Shevchenko’s verse is permeated with elements of folk-speech. Dobrolyubov,<sup>4</sup> the Russian radical, reviewing the second edition of “The Minstrel” (1860), drew a parallel between Shevchenko and Kol’tsov and found that the former had closer and firmer ties with the common people. *Prima facie* then it would seem that Shevchenko’s verse is folk-poetry. And yet statistics show that hardly more than fifty per cent of the total number of verses in “The Minstrel” are written in the measures of Ukrainian folk-song and that thirty per cent of the verses are iambic, i.e. in a metre directly at variance with the predominantly trochaic movement of the folk-songs.<sup>5</sup> Even the typical folk-song measures are not used in the manner of the folk-songs, but as, for instance, the characteristic ballad “Perebendya” shows, are blended in a very individual fashion. The Soviet Ukrainian poet Maksym Ryl’s’ky, summarising, in his Shevchenko commemoration address of 1939, the investigations of philology in the sphere of Shevchenko’s prosody, points out that Shevchenko’s metrical heritage consists of two main patterns of rhythm—that of the *kolomyjka* verse (alternating lines of eight and six syllables, with a general trochaic movement and great freedom in stressing) and that of the *kolyadka* verse (lines of eleven and twelve syllables, with a general grouping into amphibrachs and an equally free stress on either side of a fixed caesura).<sup>6</sup> The *kolomyjka* rhythm may be illustrated by—

*Ne zhenysya na bahatij,*  
*Bo vyzhene z khaty.*

(1845)

(Don’t marry a rich bride, for she’ll chase you out of the house), and the *kolyadka* rhythm by—

*Otak u Skutari kozaky spivaly;*  
*Spivaly serdehy, a sl’ozy lylyś . . .*

(*Hamaliya*, 1842.)

<sup>3</sup> See Marietta Shaginyan, *Taras Shevchenko* (Moscow, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> *Souremennik*, LXXX, St. Petersburg, 1860.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Shaginyan, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Byulleten’ No. 2 stenogrammy VI plenuma SSP*, Kiev, 1939, p. 95.

(Thus the Cossacks sang in Scutari—the wretches sang, and their tears flowed.)

But these two types of rhythm are subtly varied, and the presence of iambic and anapaestic metres adds to the rhythmic richness of Shevchenko's verse.

It must be plain from the foregoing technical details that we have to do here with more than a simple imitator of folk-songs, who, as Milton in his *L'Allegro* said inaccurately of Shakespeare, "warbled his native woodnotes wild". For like Shakespeare, another author with a defective early education, Shevchenko was an uncommonly sensitive and impressionable man, quick to learn, and able to transform acquired knowledge to his own use and to give it the stamp of his unique genius. A sober study of Shevchenko's poetry convinces us of this, even though we can easily pick out its folk-song elements. But as we read his "Diary" we continually marvel at the variety of his interests and information, the maturity of his understanding, his balanced judgment in the fields of literature and aesthetics,<sup>7</sup> and his high moral standard. It is difficult, after reading the "Diary" and the stories, to conceive Shevchenko as the semi-literate peasant of Turgenev's description,<sup>8</sup> and we may well imagine that in his early St. Petersburg days, when he unobtrusively laid the foundations of his artistic technique and wrote the mature sequences of "The Minstrel", he followed literary developments in the intervals of painting. We learn from his story "The Artist" that Bryullov, Shevchenko's teacher and friend, encouraged him to love books and to read poetry aloud, although he objected to Shevchenko's cultivating verse, because it interfered with the latter's studies at the Academy of Art.

We have examined the technique of Shevchenko's verse and can now briefly review its subject-matter. Like the technique which it informs, this is varied, but can be reduced to a number of dominant patterns. There is, first, the recurrent theme of the seduced girl, which obsessed Shevchenko and may have been partly suggested to him by both Russian and Ukrainian authors, but the obsession of the theme was due to the fate of his first love, the village-girl Oksana Kovalenko. Less personal are the historical themes centred in the exploits of the Cossacks and the haydamaks, which may be resolved into symbols of the struggle of the Ukrainian people against foreign oppression. Shevchenko's very life is bound

<sup>7</sup> Cf. for instance his assessment of Eugene Sue and his review of Karl Libelt's *Estetyka czyli umnictwo piekne*.

<sup>8</sup> "Shevchenko had read . . . very little (even Gogol' was familiar to him superficially), and he knew even less" (see *Literaturnyye i zhiteyskiye vospominaniya*, Leningrad, 1934, p. 257). We get a similar impression of Shevchenko from the reminiscences of the Ukrainian historian N. I. Kostomarov.

up with the theme of the exile's longing for his homeland, which is as intense in the lyrics of his St. Petersburg days as in those which he wrote in the Caspian steppes. Other attitudes which show no slackening of intensity are those of opposition to the Tsarist order and of anti-clericalism, the second of which has led the Soviet critic to diagnose atheism in Shevchenko. Opposition to Tsar and Church, as the executive organs of Russian tyranny, which supported the minor, if no less galling tyranny of the serf-owning Polish and Russian landowners, was innate in our poet, whose childhood knew the hair-raising stories of his grandfather and whose manhood had felt the heavy hand of Nicholas I and his henchmen. Shevchenko's frequent and caustic attacks on the Russian monarchy and the Orthodox Church in league with it have given Soviet criticism cause to regard him as a "revolutionary", and it is characteristic of this view that in 1939 the University of Odessa published a symposium with the title "The Great Poet-Revolutionary". We cannot deny that there are passages in Shevchenko's verse, and especially in his Russian prose, which lend colour to such a view, but scrutiny of his biography shows that Shevchenko was no activist, for all his radical opinions, and belonged to no revolutionary organisation, although he had friends in the liberal Society of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and appears to have been acquainted with N. G. Chernyshevsky. This Russian radical, incidentally, quoted Shevchenko as his authority on Ukrainian conditions when he attacked the anti-Russian policy of the L'viv "Word" (*Slovo*) as a member of the dominant nationality in the Russian Empire, to whom foreign criticism of his country was as repugnant as it had been to Pushkin.<sup>9</sup> What drew Shevchenko to the Russian "revolutionaries" in his latter days was an unrelenting hatred of established authority—both that of the landowners and that of the Russian government. These had been the twin sources of his miseries from his birth. And how intense those miseries could be we realise, for instance, from the pages of his "Diary", in which he complained on 19th June, 1857: "If I had been a monster, a murderer, even then a more fitting punishment could not have been devised for me than that of sending me off as a private to the Special Orenburg Corps. It is here that you have the cause of my indescribable sufferings. And in addition to all this I am forbidden to sketch". To these words he subsequently adds the scathing remark: "The heathen Augustus, banishing Naso to the savage Getae, did not forbid him to write or to sketch. Yet the Christian Nicholas forbade me both". Is it strange then that Shevchenko's

<sup>9</sup> See N. G. Chernyshevsky, "Natsional'naya bestaktnost'" (*Sovremennoye Obozreniye*, July 1861), reprinted in *Iz literaturnogo nasledstva N. G. Chernyshevskogo* (Saratov, 1937), pp. 101-102.

highly-strung nature, prone to extremes of feeling, as the superlatives in his letters and "Diary" show, should have resented such treatment and the many humiliations of military discipline, which in his case only stopped short at running the gauntlet? Is it to be wondered at too that after ten years of exile, broken in health (partly indeed through his own unwisdom), he should on occasion have been unable to restrain violent and even obscene outbursts against the powers that had wronged him?

Shevchenko, as we have just hinted, had his moments of weakness as well as considerable strength of character. Such moments of weakness led him into contradictions. The warm defender of feminine virtue confessed in a letter to his physician and friend A. O. Kozachkovs'ky in 1852<sup>10</sup> that he could not boast even then "of a very chaste mode of life". In spite of this however Shevchenko's unchanging dream was of love, marriage, and domestic felicity in his native Ukraine. This dream continually recurs almost as a *leitmotiv* in his verse and it closes the last poem he wrote before he died.<sup>11</sup>

Although Shevchenko never married, love played a significant part in his career,<sup>12</sup> and several of the women he was attracted to, including the peasant-girl who jilted him towards the end of his life, were the subjects of his pictures, for Shevchenko was a portraitist as well as a painter of landscapes and historical canvasses. To understand him completely, as we must, it is necessary to study his work in that other field of art which he made his own.<sup>13</sup> Here the influence of Karl Bryullov was of capital importance, even if it did not rise, except in the earliest phase, to the plane of inspiration. Shevchenko's careful and accurate draughtsmanship, his attention to detail, and his ability to seize and reproduce a slightly stylised likeness were all the results of Bryullov's precept and example. But the static quality of Bryullov's Classical art found no reflection in Shevchenko's practice. Between 1838 and 1847 Shevchenko passed through his period of apprenticeship to art, working mainly at the St. Petersburg Academy. By 1840 he was already illustrating books with engravings, and his subsequent visits to the Ukraine provided him with practice in portraiture and with fresh impressions. 1847, when he was exiled to Orenburg, was a critical year in his life. Yet what seemed at first like catastrophe

<sup>10</sup> See M. Shaginyan, *op. cit.* p. 188. "The Minstrel" contains *inter alia* a lengthy epistle to this friend (*A. O. Kozachkovs'komu*).

<sup>11</sup> *Chy ne pokynut' nam, neboho* ("Shall we then give up, my poor dear").

<sup>12</sup> See M. Shaginyan, *op. cit.* pp. 129-224.

<sup>13</sup> See I. L. Bolyasny, "Shevchenko—khudozhnyk" (in *Velykyy poet-revolutsioner*, Odessa, 1939, pp. 215-259).

to the artist was not without its blessings in the long run. When Shevchenko was allowed to sketch in 1848 he made admirable use of his keen vision to solve completely the mystery of light and shade, which had fascinated him in the sunlight of the Ukraine and now possessed him in the intenser light of the Caspian sands. Bryullov was no longer at hand to demand exclusive adherence to Classical and Biblical themes. Shevchenko's natural curiosity was attracted to landscape and ethnographic detail, although he could still practice portraiture by depicting at least himself. The work he did in exile is chiefly in water-colour and pencil. His choice of theme shows that he had largely outgrown his taste for Romantic and literary subjects and now prefers, as in his "Diary" and stories, to reproduce the seen and the known.<sup>14</sup> Soldiers, the "Kirgiz", especially "Kirgiz" children, and the sun-scorched arid landscapes, with their wide expanses, rugged bluffs, and rare vegetation—such things figure in the exiled Shevchenko's sketches and paintings. Yet when he returned to the capital in 1858 we find that he had brought with him a set of illustrations to the parable of the Prodigal Son. These however are not done, as they might have been, in a Bryullov-style Biblical context, but are "modernised" and given realistic touches, like the verse-adaptations of the Scriptures which he made in his later years.<sup>15</sup> The transition from Romanticism to Realism, which represents a change in European art and thought in the middle of the nineteenth century, may therefore be followed as plainly in Shevchenko's painting as in his literary work.

## II

We began this essay with an attempt to detach Shevchenko from his reputation and we have considered him apart from it. Let us now consider him as a symbol, for this is one of the forms which a man's reputation may invest. All Shevchenko's literary work is closely bound up with his love and longing for the Ukraine. It is only in the concrete visual detail of painting that his thoughts seem at times to be completely removed from his native landscapes and memories. Now it is the patriotic aspect of Shevchenko's work, especially of his poetry, which first endeared him to his compatriots and has since made him the personification of the Ukrainian's thirst for liberty and independence. One might interpose here that the patriot Shevchenko of, say, the celebrated "Testament" (*Zapovit*) of 1845, in which he calls on his own to bury him and to rise and

<sup>14</sup> E. g. the picture "Running the Gauntlet" (*U. Kara shpitsrutenamy*).

<sup>15</sup> E. g. the paraphrase of Psalm XL (1859) and the adaptation of Hosea XIV (1859).

break their chains, and, echoing a passage of *La Marseillaise*, "to spatter freedom with evil enemy blood",—that this Shevchenko is only a fragment of a much larger whole, that his patriotism is only one aspect of his many-sided personality. It should be further pointed out, as the Soviet critic is only too apt to do, that this emphasis on Shevchenko's patriotism ignores his strong social consciousness, his "atheism", his very real anti-clericalism. To be sure it does; but at the same time there is no denying that his patriotism plays a highly important part in his poetry and has been rightly chosen by nationally-minded Ukrainians for special emphasis, just as the rather less important social criticism in his work has been emphasised by those intent on proving his revolutionary affiliations.<sup>16</sup> Shevchenko's patriotism is that of the artist who is primarily a man of feeling. With him it is not a shibboleth, but a profound emotional experience. Nevertheless it has binding power and it can serve, as Shevchenko knew well himself, as a call to arms. Study of those lyrics in which he speaks of his country not merely as an object of longing, but as the future home of his liberated compatriots, shows that he tried to project his sense of national equity into the future and to visualise this as an age of personal freedom in the homeland. So we find him, in his "Friendly Epistle to My Compatriots" (1845), urging them not to seek freedom and brotherhood abroad, but in their native Ukraine, in their own homes, where they will find "their own truth, strength, and freedom", and imploring them to create a new age by embracing one another in brotherhood. These words hold good to-day as they did when they were written over a hundred years ago, although conditions in the Ukraine are in some respects very different from what they were then. But the realisation of the ideal expressed in Shevchenko's words is prevented by circumstances for which Ukrainians themselves are not collectively responsible. An intolerant alien power still presides, as it did in Shevchenko's time, over the destinies of their country and has even succeeded recently in uniting under its control all the Ukrainian-speaking lands. The presence of that power has led to an exodus of Ukrainians from the Ukraine in moments of crisis since the emancipation of the serfs after Shevchenko's death made collective movement possible. In consequence of this a notable part of the Ukrainian people now lives outside the national frontiers. The existence of such a body of emigrants<sup>17</sup> is a sure sign of an abnormal state of things at home.

<sup>16</sup> See Ya. S. Parkhomenko, "Hart polumyanoho revolyutsionera" and L. P. Nosenko, "Shevchenko i rosiys'ka revolyutsiyana demokratiya" (in *Velykyy poet-revolutsioner*, Odessa, 1939).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the Irish emigration to the U.S.A. after the potato famine in the 19th century.

But it is by no means the only sign, for the long history of the Ukraine has been an abnormal history of repeated annexations since Kyiv fell to the steppe tribes in the early 13th century. This state of nearly unbroken national servitude brings vividly to mind the career of the great and lovable man whose anniversary we are celebrating to-day. Shevchenko's story is that of his native land in microcosm. No wonder then that his inspiring words are especially treasured by all those of his compatriots who have experienced the bitter anguish of exile and who still love and have not lost their faith in a regenerate Ukraine.

W. K. MATTHEWS.

## INTRODUCTION

### I

THIS volume has been published to commemorate the centenary of the death of Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko, Ukraine's greatest poet. One may wonder what particular appeal and interest a poet of a relatively little-known nation can have for the English-speaking reader, but on consideration it will be seen that the importance of Ukraine's rôle in the modern world can hardly be overestimated. For, after the Russian Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), Ukraine has the largest population and the greatest economic strength among the sixteen republics forming the Soviet Union. Moreover, the very survival of Soviet Russia as one of the greatest world powers depends on Ukraine's resources and manpower. Obviously, then, no serious student of world affairs can afford to ignore Ukraine, for his efforts to understand fully the forces at work inside the Soviet Union would be fruitless if he did not also try to understand the Ukrainians whose position in the Soviet Union is so significant.

The growth and development of a nation naturally fall within the domain of historical studies, and the relevance of its literature, in particular its poetry, may well be questioned. Even if most people no longer subscribe to the extreme doctrine that literature is produced in a vacuum, independently of all conditions of time and place, the usual view is that literature is shaped and coloured by the history of a nation and by the development of its civilization. While in this relationship between history and literature the primacy of the former is freely admitted, the influence of literature on the life and history of a nation is usually discounted: life shapes literature, not *vice versa*.

Shevchenko is a striking exception to this rule, for it is his work, his poetry, which has brought about the Ukrainian renaissance of the last hundred years. Ukraine owes her revival as a distinct nation almost entirely to Shevchenko who, neither statesman nor politician, has always been revered and honoured by all Ukrainians as their national hero, lodestar and prophet. Indeed, the homage paid him by Ukrainians has been far greater than that accorded by any other nation to its greatest poet.

Also the part taken by Shevchenko in the shaping of literary Ukrainian has been more important than that of any other author; it may even be said that had he been the only writer to use this language, he would have left it as a perfect literary medium.

The value and interest of Shevchenko's poetry to the present-day reader is manifold: firstly, it is a social document of his age;



secondly, its unparalleled influence on the subsequent generations of Ukrainians and on the destinies of their country merits very close attention; thirdly, its appeal is universal, for Shevchenko was a great humanist and an advocate of freedom for all peoples; finally, the purely poetic qualities of Shevchenko's work are unsurpassed in Ukrainian literature to this day, which is saying a very great deal when one remembers the poetry of Ukrainian folk-song, universally recognized as outstandingly melodious, which forms part of this literature's inheritance.

## II

Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko was born on 9 March\* 1814 in the village Moryntsi, some ninety miles south of Kiev, in central Ukraine. His parents, like almost all peasants in the Russian empire of that time, were serfs, so that they were the property of their landlord and had to work almost the whole week for him without any payment in kind or money. In order to keep their children and themselves alive, they had to till their small allotment in any remaining time (chiefly at night). Although Shevchenko's parents worked hard, the difficulties of feeding a family of six children were enormous, and poverty was a permanent guest, though not an unusual one in the Ukraine of that time. The relatively unclouded childhood of the nine-year-old Taras came to an end when constant hard work brought his mother to an early grave at the age of forty. His father soon re-married, and the step-mother proved to be very harsh with the boy, whose life became even more intolerable when his father's death nineteen months later left him a complete orphan.

From early childhood, Taras had a passion for reading, which he learnt in the village school, and for art, and would use every scrap of paper he could lay hands on for copying out poetry or sketching. Being inwardly impelled towards art, he tried, unsuccessfully, to become an apprentice to one or other of the local icon painters, but, after various vicissitudes, and having reached the age of fifteen, when a young serf had to start work for his master, he was taken on to the estate of Engelhardt as a personal servant. Only a few months later, in the autumn of 1829, he had to leave Ukraine, going in the retinue of his master via Kiev to Vilno and then to St. Petersburg. Every free moment the young Shevchenko devoted secretly to sketching and copying any prints that he could get hold of. Often he incurred his master's wrath and punishment; however, Engelhardt, wishing to make the best use of his serf and

\* Apart from the dates of Shevchenko's birth and death, all other dates in this book are given in the old style when reference is made to events in the Russian empire.

to own a trained portrait painter, sent him for a short time to study painting in Vilno, and in 1832, a year after their arrival in St. Petersburg, he apprenticed him to a painter and decorator, Shirayayev. Another three years passed before Shevchenko's fellow-countryman and artist, a student at the Academy of Arts, I. M. Soshenko, chanced to come across him during one of the "white" nights of St. Petersburg in July 1835. Such nights were the only time when Shevchenko was free to make his own sketches of the classical statues lining the walks of the Summer Garden. The circumstances of this meeting which was to change so radically the course of Shevchenko's life, and thus also to influence the future destinies of Ukraine, he describes in his autobiographical novel *The Artist*.<sup>1</sup> Soshenko became enthusiastic about Shevchenko's artistic abilities, and introduced him to the well-known Ukrainian writer Ye. P. Hrebinka who also befriended the gifted young man. He lent Shevchenko many books from his extensive library, among which Ukrainian literature and history occupied a prominent place, and which the latter read most eagerly.

Some eighteen months later Soshenko, who had been guiding Shevchenko's self-education in art, introduced him to another Ukrainian, the *konferenz*-secretary of the Academy of Arts and lecturer in the theory of art, V. I. Hryhorovych, asking his help in trying to secure the talented youth's freedom. Other men of art and letters were also among his friends and acquaintances, among them V. A. Zhukovsky, the famous Russian poet and translator of English and German poetry, and the renowned painter K. Bryullov, who at that time had just won world-wide acclaim for his painting "The Last Day of Pompeii". (One of his admirers was Sir Walter Scott.) Bryullov, when shown Shevchenko's pictures, praised them warmly; everyone of this circle agreed that Shevchenko should be freed from the bonds of serfdom, and when a direct appeal to the better nature of his owner, Engelhardt, failed, Bryullov painted an excellent portrait of Zhukovsky which was disposed of by a private

<sup>1</sup> The narrator in this novel is Soshenko who is made to describe his meeting with the twenty-one-year-old Shevchenko as follows:

. . . I went up closer to him and asked what he was doing there. "I'm not doing anything," he replied courteously. "I'm on my way to work and so I came into the Park." Then, after a short silence, he added: "I've been sketching."  
"Let me see your sketch."

From inside his jacket he drew a foolscap sheet of grey paper and timidly handed it to me. I looked at it and saw a fairly accurate drawing of Saturn in outline.

I held the sketch for some time in my hand as I took stock of the artist's face which, though grimy, was much to my liking. It was gaunt, with irregular features, but there was something very attractive about it just the same. In particular, the eyes displayed intelligence, as well as gentleness, like those of a girl.

(From Paul Selver's forthcoming translation of Shevchenko's *The Artist* which will be published as Part 1 of Volume Two of the present series.)

lottery, and for the 2,500 roubles thus raised Shevchenko's freedom was bought on 22 April 1838, when he was twenty-four years old.

Shevchenko's happiness was boundless. From a mere serf, a chattel of his master, he had become a free man, an independent student, formally enrolled at the Academy, and a favourite pupil and friend of the famous Bryullov. Now he could plunge into his beloved art and apply himself to many branches of learning, making up for the time lost in the slavery of serfdom.

He was very successful in his studies at the Academy and won several medals. Apart from oil paintings and water colours, he also produced illustrations for a number of books, and his drawings for one of them<sup>2</sup> were engraved on steel by a prominent London engraver, J. H. Robinson, later a member of the Royal Academy.

### III

Shevchenko probably started writing poetry about 1832, but he kept only one poem out of all those he wrote while still a serf. His first published collection of eight poems appeared in the second year of his freedom, 1840, under the title *Kobzar* ("The Minstrel"), and it won him immediate renown; a year later, his longest historical poem, *Haydamaky*, was published as a separate book. Several other poems were printed in various publications and separately till 1844, when the original *Kobzar* and *Haydamaky* had their second edition in one volume.

A frequent comment on Shevchenko's poetry is that it is based on Ukrainian folk-songs. This is of course true inasmuch as Shevchenko often drew inspiration from folk-lore, but he also enriched Ukrainian literary poetry with completely new genres, a great variety of original metric patterns, extremely striking and powerful rhythms, bold and unusual rhyme schemes, and unequalled music and melody. His innovations represented not only a great advance on the poetry preceding his, but the excellence of his work remains unsurpassed to this day. One indication of his great and immediate success is the fact that very many of his poems have been set to music, while a number of them became virtually folk-songs very soon after their first appearance in print. Thus, the beginning of his first extant poem, "Bewitched" (1, 1-12),<sup>3</sup> is now

<sup>2</sup> N. Polevoy, *Rusскиye polkovodtsy, ili zhizn' rossiyskikh polkovodtsev* . . . , St. Petersburg, 1845.

<sup>3</sup> The references to the poems in English translation included in the present volume are given in the same way as those in the Notes (pp. 115 ff. below), viz.: figures in italics refer to pages, those in ordinary type refer to lines.

perhaps the best known Ukrainian song. The only other song which might claim to share this distinction is that taken from the opening poem of his *Kobzar* ("O my thoughts," 8, 1 ff. and note).

Some of his first poems continue the Romantic ballad tradition, vigorous in the European literature of the first half of the 19th century, with its love of the mysterious and fantastic, mist and moonlight, clouds and storms. "Bewitched" (1-6) is an excellent example of this. However, the settings and characters are purely Ukrainian, and Shevchenko's debt to folk-lore is apparent. Thus, in the first line appears the Dnieper, the largest Ukrainian river and the symbol of Ukraine; then, the rye fields, reeds by the river, grave-mounds, glimpses of village life; the Cossack, the guelder-rose . . . The rusalky, who play such an important part in this ballad, are taken straight from Ukrainian folk-lore: they are water-nymphs, the spirits of girl babies who die unbaptised; they live in the water till Whitsuntide, when they come out for a week to run about in the rye, to sing their song (which is quoted by Shevchenko directly from popular tradition: 3, 95-8, 113-116) and to lure away any passing young men or girls in order to tickle them to death.

The metrical structure of this early masterpiece of Shevchenko is complex, varying with the changes of mood, in lyrical digressions, and to mark the progress of the narrative. Thus, the first descriptive passage sets the scene in iambic tetrameters (e.g. "And now and then the ash-tree creaked": 1, 12), quickening, with the onset of action, into what is conventionally called *kolomyjka* verse (cf. p. xiv above): "Such a night, beneath the mountain, There, beside the spinney" (13-14). Presently the poet interrupts his narrative in order to meditate upon the plight of his heroine, and this is immediately marked by a change to the slow-moving *kolyadka* verse, as it is usually called (*loc. c.*), which falls generally into four amphibrachs: "But whom, then, O whom can the orphan approach" (2, 63). On resuming his tale, the poet returns to the river, clouds and moon of the first twelve lines, and also returns to the same iambs (79-3, 92), which do however differ from the former in their rhyme scheme. In the song of the rusalky, Shevchenko's rhyming couplets of varying length are organically integrated with the lines borrowed from folk-lore, and are similar in structure to them (93-116). The four iambic lines after the song, together with the iambs before it, furnish it with a kind of frame within which it stands out all the more clearly. The subsequent action calls again for *kolomyjka* verse (121-5, 188), which is then changed into iambs (189) and back again (201) to mark the intervening passage of time. This amazingly rich and complex metrical pattern is characteristic of Shevchenko, particularly in his longer poems, and it can be attributed to the fact that he perceived the world largely in musical terms. It may be observed

that such a pattern is not unlike that of a symphony with its movements and recurring themes.<sup>4</sup>

Shevchenko's other poems written in St. Petersburg, away from his homeland, often have the minor key motif of a Cossack (this word means "a Ukrainian" in Shevchenko's usage) far from his native country ("Song", 7, "The Boat", 15); sometimes, the exile is the poet himself ("O my thoughts", 9, 38-43, 10, 79-100). His thoughts frequently turn to his Ukraine, symbolized by the Dnieper, the broad steppes, the lofty ancient gravemounds which are the visible signs of the past glory and freedom of the Cossacks whose descendants are now in Russian bondage. In a number of poems he conjures up visions of Ukraine's heroic past, as in "The Night of Taras" (11-14)—an episode in the struggle against Polish overlordship, and "Hamaliya" (16-20), which describes a sea raid on a Turkish city to liberate Ukrainian captives. Incidentally, it is significant that the highly effective descriptions of the sea were written actually during a sea voyage.<sup>5</sup> The metre and rhyme scheme of this poem is again very varied and powerful.<sup>6</sup>

#### IV

It should be recalled that all the poems published in 1840-44 were written between eight and thirteen years after the poet's departure from his native Ukraine as a boy of fifteen. Not until he was a man of twenty-nine did he return to his homeland on a short visit in 1843, then he again went to Ukraine, intending to settle there for good, after completing his studies at the Academy of Arts in 1845. Confronted with the realities of life in his country, he sounded a much sharper note of protest in his new poems in which his view of history was clearly formulated. Most of the poems were not meant for publication under the severe censorship conditions prevailing under Nicholas I, but they circulated in

<sup>4</sup> The greatest living Ukrainian poet, Maksym Ryl's'ky, observed that abrupt changes of metre were also to be found in other great poets, though less frequently, and compared this feature of Shevchenko's poetry with the metric variety of Goethe's *Faust* (M. Ryl's'ky, *Poeziya Tarasa Shevchenko*, Moscow, 1961, p. 35).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. Zaytsev, *Zhyttya Tarasa Shevchenka*, New York—Paris—Munich, 1955, pp. 93-4.

<sup>6</sup> Vera Rich's versions follow closely Shevchenko's verse structure both in metre and in rhyme schemes. In this poem in particular, her very successful rendering of the difficult internal rhymes in the original lines "Hamaliyu, sértse mliye" and "Hamaliyu, viter vire" as "Hamaliya! Valour's fleeing!" (17, 54, 18, 86) and "Hamaliya! Winds blow freely!" (20, 184) is noteworthy.

numerous manuscript copies among his close friends and acquaintances, and among many other Ukrainians who had never met him but greatly admired his previously published poetry.<sup>7</sup>

The only poem written by Shevchenko in Ukrainian during the eight months of his first visit to Ukraine, "The Plundered Grave" (21-2), voices his country's desperate cry, as she is robbed by the Muscovites, and her curses upon Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky who delivered her into their hands. The next poem, "Chyhyryn" (23-5), written in Moscow on the return journey to St. Petersburg, is similar in tone: the poet laments the decline and decay of Chyhyryn, Ukraine's former capital and a symbol of her former independence, glory and freedom.

Back in St. Petersburg, Shevchenko wrote one of the most important of his major poems, "The Dream" (26-39), a panorama of the Russian empire of his day together with flashbacks into the history of Ukraine. The poem is presented as a dream, in which the narrator flies first to Ukraine, then to Siberia, and lastly reaches St. Petersburg. In the picture of Ukraine, a striking contrast is achieved by the description of her beautiful landscape, against which background the cruel iniquities of serfdom appear even blacker. Trying to find peace, in his flight from Ukraine the poet is borne to Siberia, only to find yet more iniquity there, as he sees political prisoners digging gold for the "Imperial Gullet". Leaving this land of torment, he soon finds himself in the capital. Here he finds the ultimate source of all oppression and wrongs, the tsar himself. The portraits of the hated autocrat and his wife are grotesque, but not without realism (cf. 33, 315-19 and note), while the amazing scene of "mug-hitting" down the line neatly symbolizes the tyranny and servility in the descending line of the Russian bureaucratic and social order. Once outside the palace, the poet finds himself before the statue of Peter the Great over which there first hovers the ghost of Hetman Polubotok who accuses Peter of crimes against the Ukrainian people and himself; these accusations are presently strengthened by the ghosts of the Cossacks themselves bearing down upon the brazen statue. This poem represents one of the most violent invectives against tsarism and its crimes against Ukraine.

In April 1845, having completed his studies at the Academy of Arts and gained his diploma, Shevchenko returned to Ukraine. During the following two years he travelled about his native country a good deal, studying antiquities for the Archaeographical Commission, and in 1847 was appointed a lecturer in drawing

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, it is significant that this clandestine poetry of Shevchenko, so revolutionary and anti-imperialist in spirit, was ignored and spurned by such Russian progressives as V. Belinsky and his friends (V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, XII, Moscow, 1956, p. 440; V. Swoboda, "Shevchenko and Belinsky" [cf. Bibliography]).

at the University of Kiev. This period, or, more precisely, the last quarter of 1845,<sup>8</sup> was the most productive in Shevchenko's life: together with all his other activities, he wrote within just under three months more than three thousand lines of poetry, including such masterpieces as "The Great Vault", "The Caucasus", "The Servant-girl", "My Friendly Epistle", "Testament" and others.

"The Great Vault," written in a style resembling that of the mystery plays, presents Shevchenko's views on the history of Ukraine from the mid-seventeenth century down to his own times. The characters are mostly allegoric and symbolic. In the first part (41-5), the three souls represent Ukraine in three different periods of her history, namely the time of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky, who concluded the Pereyaslav treaty with the Russians, the time of Mazeppa, who was defeated together with the Swedish king, Charles XII, by Peter the Great, and the time of Catherine II, who abolished the vestiges of Ukrainian autonomy. Shevchenko sees these moments in history as three successive stages in the gradual process of Ukraine's subjugation by Russia. The three souls of Ukraine are punished for having contributed to her downfall: by wishing Khmel'nyts'ky success in negotiating a union with the Russians, by helping Peter in his war against Charles and Mazeppa, and, finally, by hoping for favours from Catherine. In the second part (45-51) the poet introduces three crows, the evil genii of Ukraine, Poland and Russia; they brag to each other about the evils they have succeeded in inflicting upon their countries. The three minstrels of the third part (51-4) represent the Ukraine of Shevchenko's day, helpless and ignorant. All these three groups have come to the same place, the scene of the excavation of the legendary Great Vault of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky, where, so the poet implies, there lies hidden Ukraine's freedom, which will return once the Great Vault is open (cf. also 22, 49-53). For the three souls of Ukraine this spells deliverance; the crows are annoyed by the excavations, and for the minstrels this is merely an opportunity to earn some money by singing about Bohdan. The Russian authorities excavating the Vault hope to find there Khmel'nyts'ky's treasure, but disappointment awaits them: they have excavated one of the smaller vaults, and the place where the Great Vault lies, with Ukraine's freedom buried in it, is still unknown. Such, in short, is the pattern of Shevchenko's central poem, which abounds in messages, both plain and coded, some of which still await their decoding.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Ohloblyn-Hlobenko, "1845 rik u tvorchosti Shevchenka" (*Istoryko-literaturni statti — Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva imeny Shevchenka*, vol. 167, New York—Paris—Munich, 1958, pp. 32-44; reviewed in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 39, No. 92, London, 1960, p. 240).

The next poem, "The Servant-girl" (55-68), is a straightforward, simple, but profoundly human and masterfully told story. It differs from most of Shevchenko's other tales of seduced girls (cf. p. xv above) in that the heroine of this story herself brings up her child to manhood, without revealing the fact that she is his mother until upon her deathbed.

It is hardly possible to find a more passionate, scathing, or damning invective against Russian colonialism and military imperialism than Shevchenko's "The Caucasus" (69-73). He ruthlessly un-masks the so-called civilization brought to the hitherto free peoples of the Caucasus on the bayonets of the Russian "Christian" armies: among the blessings of this civilization the poet sees a hypocritical Christianity, closely followed by the arts of knout plaiting and the science of prison building, in that Prison of the Peoples where, in the now famous phrase, "from the Moldavian to the Finn silence is held in every tongue", for they are "all quite content" (71, 92-4). The line (90) mentioning Siberia ("too vast to cross!"), with which the untutored Caucasians will have an opportunity to become acquainted if they submit themselves to Russian schooling, has an uncannily prophetic ring for the modern reader: exactly a hundred years later whole peoples were deported from the Caucasus to Siberia by another, though still Russian, régime.

In his "Friendly Epistle" (74-80) Shevchenko returns to Ukrainian history, but this time it is to admonish severely those of his countrymen who, while rhapsodizing about Ukraine's past and playing the part of ardent Slavophiles, prefer not to see the plight of their less fortunate brethren under the yoke of serfdom. The only way to avoid fratricidal bloodshed lies in justice and respect for Mother-Ukraine; "come, my brothers, and embrace each your humblest brother . . . I entreat and pray you!" ends Shevchenko's appeal to his countrymen.

"The Cold Ravine" (81-3) takes Shevchenko once more to the peasant revolt which was the subject of his longest poem, *Haydamaky* (cf. p. xiii above). Polemizing with a historian for whom the haydamaks were "bandits" (cf. 82, 57-9 and note), he prophesies the vengeance of a new revolt against those who persist in keeping in shackles their own misfortunate brethren.

The famous "Testament" (85) (written on Christmas Day 1845, during a serious illness) may be considered as the conclusion to this cycle of poems. It has become practically a second Ukrainian national anthem and has also been translated into not fewer than forty-three languages. In the poem's impassioned call to a struggle for national liberation there can be no doubt as to who the foemen are if one remembers "The Plundered Grave", "Chyhyryn", "The Dream", "The Great Vault", and "The Caucasus".



In 1846, several Ukrainian scholars and intellectuals founded the secret Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius whose aim was to advocate a spiritual and political union of all the Slavonic peoples in which they would enjoy independence and equal rights, while each member nation would govern itself in accordance with Christian and democratic principles. Several of Shevchenko's friends were members of this Brotherhood, and he himself joined it with great enthusiasm and became its source of inspiration. A year later, however, the Ukrainian Brotherhood was denounced to the Russian authorities, and its members were arrested. Thus, after a mere nine years of freedom, Shevchenko was deprived of it again on 5 April 1847, to be released from this second captivity only four years before his death.

On the evidence of his clandestine poems, found with him and in copies with his fellow-members, Shevchenko was accused of having inspired dissatisfaction with the enslavement of Ukraine and of having suggested that Ukraine's happiness could be achieved only through independence. The extreme popularity and success of his poetry among Ukrainians was considered in the indictment as an aggravating circumstance. Moreover, his poem "The Dream" contained unflattering references to Nicholas I and his wife. Shevchenko was sentenced to military service as a private for an indefinite period (a severe punitive measure in those days, usually for twenty-five years) in the Orenburg Separate Corps. Nicholas added a rider in his own hand: "Under the strictest supervision and with a ban on writing and sketching".

Shevchenko spent much of his service in the barren Central Asian deserts on the Aral and Caspian Seas, often suffering extreme hardships and privations, and almost completely cut off from the world. In spite of the ban, he sometimes secretly managed to write, hiding away from everyone during short off-duty periods, or at night, and concealing the tiny book in his boot. For a time he was even semi-officially permitted to paint when his services were useful to his superiors on a hydrographical expedition on the Aral Sea.

After the death of Nicholas I in 1855 Shevchenko's friends renewed their efforts to obtain his pardon. However, he was excluded from the general amnesty, and it was only after two years' perseverance on their part that they succeeded in securing his release; nor was he free, after his release, from police surveillance, chicanery, and restrictions on his movements.

While during his imprisonment and exile Shevchenko wrote practically no long poems, much of his poetry of this period is exquisitely lyrical. Of course, he had also written such poems previously (e.g. "Why weighs the heart heavy?", "Have no envy for the rich man", "To Little Maryana", "Days are passing":

40, 83-4, and others), and his great poems also abound in lyrical digressions, but it was in this period that he created many of his gems of perfection. While awaiting his sentence in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, between 17 April and 30 May 1847 Shevchenko wrote a group of twelve poems, varied in theme and style, but forming a unity of twelve perfect cameos (86-8). While in exile, he wrote poetry only during the first three years (a few of these poems are found here : 89-95), then after a slight unofficial relaxation of his conditions (cf. "Blaze of lights", 95) he was denounced to higher authorities, arrested and transferred to an even remoter place where he was subjected to even harsher treatment. During the remaining seven years (May 1850—April 1857) Shevchenko wrote no poetry.<sup>9</sup>

After his release, broken in health, but unchanged in spirit, he takes up again his earlier themes. With the force and majestic dignity of an Old Testament prophet he inveighs against the corrupt ways of this world and sees visions of the overthrow of oppressors and tyrannical monarchs. As before, he shows Russia as the oppressor of Ukraine, and never departs from his condemnation of Kholmyns'ky.

"The Neophytes" (96-110) was the first poem written after Shevchenko had left his place of exile. This story of the early Christians bearing "the word of right, the word of God" in Nero's Roman empire is a but thinly disguised allegory of Nicholas's Russian empire and of Shevchenko's own and his friends' unequal struggle and martyrdom in the cause of freedom and justice.

Shevchenko's popularity and fame as a writer spread far and wide, not only in Ukrainian, but also in Russian circles. In the last year of his life he became an academician in the class of engraving.

His health, however, deteriorated rapidly, particularly from the autumn of 1860, and he died on 10 March 1861, aged just forty-seven.

His death was an immeasurable loss to the Ukrainians, but he lives on in his works which continue to be an inspiration and a call to the struggle for national liberation.

## VI

Shevchenko's name soon became known outside the Russian empire. One of the most important early appreciations of him was that by Emile Durand in *Revue des deux Mondes*<sup>10</sup> who wrote

<sup>9</sup> Except for one fragment of eight lines, probably written in 1854. It was during this period that Shevchenko wrote his prose works in Russian, and was also able to produce a considerable number of drawings and pictures.

<sup>10</sup> "Le poète national de la Petite-Russie—Chevtchenko" (XV, Paris, 15 June 1876, pp. 919-44).

that "one would search in vain elsewhere for a poet to whom the uneducated, almost illiterate, crowd likewise renders the homage ordinarily reserved for sanctuaries or saints", and this was confirmed some years before 1905 by another French scholar, Elisée Reclus, who observed that the pilgrims to Shevchenko's grave outnumbered beyond all comparison those at the grave of the most renowned French poet, Voltaire, in spite of the fact that France at that time surpassed Ukraine in cultural development. Shevchenko is a "great enough poet for his fame to cross the borders of his country and spread throughout Europe", asserted Durand concluding his study.

Back in Shevchenko's native country, his revolutionary ideas of independence and social justice inspired ever-growing numbers of his compatriots and kept in fear those "crucifiers of the nations, tyrants yet to come" (96, 15-16) against whom the poet directed his fiery word. The first of these tyrants tried to silence the poet by decree, and succeeded in driving him to an early grave. The weapon of the subsequent tyrants in their fight against his spirit has been the relentless censor's hand which has tried to keep Shevchenko's true ideas from the masses of the Ukrainian people. When the Russian revolution of 1905 brought the abolition of censorship, Ukrainians were able for the first time to print their greatest poet in full. The subsequent reaction and re-introduction of censorship in 1911 resulted in a renewed suppression of Shevchenko's word, until the fall of tsarism in February 1917 when his complete poetry could be again published. In 1950 the Soviet censors re-imposed the ban on a number of Shevchenko's poems of freedom, obviously still dangerous to the régime in power, although written a century ago.

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These renderings of Shevchenko's poems reproduce the original text line for line, with the preservation of the original metres and rhyme schemes, though many feminine rhymes are rendered by masculine ones. Incomplete rhymes, so typical of Shevchenko's poetic genius, are also very frequent in these translations; cf. Shevchenko's *póru—móri* with the corresponding endings "beams" —"sea" (1, 5, 7).

The transliteration of proper names from Cyrillic is English-style, as used in the London *Slavonic Review* (cf. note xi, p. 116 below). Correct transliterations, such as "Kyiv", "the Dniipro", are preferred by the translator even when traditional spellings ("Kiev", "the Dnieper") exist in English. Ukrainian geographical names are transliterated from those forms which appear on modern maps published in Ukraine. If a gazetteer is used which is based on Russian maps, the following substitutions should be made in the Ukrainian names: U. *h* = R. *g*; U. *y* = (generally) R. *i*; U. —*iv* = R. —*ov* or —*ev*.

V. SWOBODA.

## ПРИЧИННА

### BEWITCHED

Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro,  
An angry wind howls through the night,  
Bowing and bending the high willows,  
And raising waves to mountain heights.  
5 And, at this time, the moon's pale beams  
Peeped here and there between the clouds,  
Like a small boat on the blue sea,  
Now rising up, now sinking down.  
Still the third cock-crow was not crowed,  
10 And not a creature chanced to speak,  
Only owls hooting in the grove,  
And now and then the ash-tree creaked.

Such a night, beneath the mountain,  
There, beside the spinney  
15 Which shows black above the water,  
Something white is glimmering.  
Maybe a rusalka-baby,  
Wandering by stealth,  
Seeks her mother or a lad  
20 To tickle him to death.  
It is no rusalka roaming,  
But a young girl wandering,  
And she does not know, herself,  
Spell-bound, what she's doing.  
25 Thus the old wise-woman made it,  
So to ease her grieving,  
That, by wandering at night,  
Do you see, while sleeping,  
She could seek the Cossack who  
30 Left her last year—he promised  
That he would return to her,  
But probably he perished !  
Not with a silk kerchief have  
The Cossack's eyes been swathed,  
35 Not by her caressing tears  
Were his fair cheeks bathed :

On a foreign field, an eagle  
Plucked his eyes away,  
And the wolves devoured his flesh—  
40 Such must be his fate !  
In vain the young girl waits for him,  
Every night, in vain ;  
The dark-browed youth will not return  
Nor greet her once again.  
45 He will not have her long plait loosened,  
Nor her kerchief tied ;  
Not in a bed, but in her coffin  
Shall the orphan lie !

Such is her fortune . . . O God of all mercy,  
50 Why dost Thou punish a maiden so young?  
Because the poor child came to love so sincerely  
The Cossack's dark eyes? Ah, forgive her this wrong !  
Whom then should she love? Without father or mother,  
Alone, like a bird on a far distant shore.  
55 She is so young—O send her good fortune,  
Or strangers will mock her and laugh her to scorn.  
Is the dove to be blamed that she loves her heart's darling?  
Is he to be blamed that the hawk comes to slay?  
Grieving and cooing and weary of living,  
60 She flies all around, seeks him lost from the way.  
Fortunate bird, she can soar high above,  
Can wing up to God and implore for her dear.  
But whom, then, O whom, can the orphan approach,  
And who is to tell her, who knows where her love  
65 Is passing the night? Is he in a dark grove?  
Does he water his horse in the Danube's swift stream?  
Or perhaps there's another, another he loves,  
And she, the dark-browed, is a past, faded dream?  
If she were but given the wings of an eagle,  
70 She would find her beloved beyond the blue waves,  
In life she would love him and strangle her rival,  
And if he were dead, she would share the same grave.  
Not so the heart loves as to share with another,  
Nor is it content with what God has to give,  
75 Not wishing to live and not wishing to sorrow ;  
“ Sorrow ”, says thought, overwhelming with grief.  
Such is Thy will, then, O God, good and great,  
Such is her fortune, such is her fate.

So still she walks, she speaks no sound,

80 The Dnipro flows on silently,  
 The wind has scattered the black clouds,  
 And lain to rest beside the sea.  
 And from the sky, the moon is pouring  
 Its light upon the grove and water,  
 85 And all is resting quietly. . . .  
 But see! From out the Dnipro's tide,  
 Jump little children, laughing there.  
 "Come, let us sun ourselves!" they cry,  
 "Our sun is up!" (No clothes they wear,  
 90 But braids of sedge, for they are girls.)  
  
 "Are you all here?" the mother calls.  
 "Come, let us look for supper.  
 Let us play and sport together!  
 Sing a little song together!"  
 95 "Whisht! Whisht!  
 Will o' the wisp!  
 Mother gave me life—once born,  
 Unbaptized, she laid me down.  
 Moon above,  
 100 Dearest dove,  
 Come and sup with us tonight:  
 In the reeds a Cossack lies,  
 In the reeds and sedge, a silver  
 Ring is shining on his finger;  
 105 Young he is, with fine dark eyebrows,  
 We found him yesterday in the oak-grove.  
 Shine upon the open field  
 So that we may sport at will,  
 While the witches are still flying,  
 110 Till the morning cocks are crying,  
 Shine for us . . . Look, something goes  
 Moving there beneath the oak!  
 Whisht! Whisht!  
 Will o' the wisp!  
 115 Mother gave me life—once born,  
 Unbaptized, she laid me down."

The unbaptized babes shrieked with laughter,  
 The grove replied; wild shrieks abound,  
 Like the fierce Horde hell-bent on slaughter.  
 120 Rush to the oak . . . and not a sound . . .  
 The unbaptized stop in their tracks,

- They look : there something glimmers,  
 Some creature climbing in the tree  
 To the topmost limit.
- 125 See, it is that self-same girl  
 Who, in her sleep, would wander ;  
 Such is the bewitching spell  
 That the witch laid on her !  
 On a slender topmost branch
- 130 She stood . . . her heart was dwining.  
 She looked round, searching on all sides . . .  
 Then down she started climbing.  
 Round the oak, rusalka-babies  
 Waiting, held their breath,
- 135 Seized her as she came, poor soul,  
 And tickled her to death.  
 Long, indeed, they gazed upon her,  
 Wondering at her beauty. . . .  
 The third cock-crow rang—at once
- 140 They splashed into the water.  
 The skylark trilled its melody  
 Soaring ever up,  
 The cuckoo called its plaintive call  
 Sitting in the oak,
- 145 The nightingale burst into song,  
 It echoed through the spinney,  
 Behind the hills—a rosy blush,  
 The ploughman starts his singing.  
 The grove is black against the water
- 150 Where the Poles once crossed,  
 Above the Dnipro, the high mounds  
 With bluish light are touched.  
 A rustle passes through the grove,  
 Sets dense osiers whispering ;
- 155 There beneath the oak she lies,  
 By the footpath, sleeping.  
 Sound she sleeps, quite deaf, it seems,  
 To the cuckoo calling,  
 Does not count how long she'll live. . . .
- 160 Sound asleep she's fallen.

In the meanwhile, from the oak-grove  
 Comes a Cossack riding,  
 Under him, the raven horse  
 Can hardly move with tiredness.

165 " You are weary, my old friend,  
But we shall rest today :  
There's a cottage where a girl  
Will open us the gate.  
Or, perhaps, it is, already,  
170 Opened to another. . . .  
Good horse—faster ; good horse—faster !  
Hurry, hurry homewards ! ”  
But the raven horse is weary,  
On he walks, half-falling,  
175 Near the Cossack's heart, it seems  
There's an adder crawling.  
“ Look, it is our leafy oak-tree. . . .  
There she is ! Dear God !  
See, she fell asleep while waiting,  
180 Ah, my grey-winged dove ! ”  
He left the horse and rushed towards her :  
“ O my God, my God ! ”  
He calls her name and kisses her . . .  
But it does no good.

185 “ Why, then have they parted us,  
Me from you ? ” He broke  
Into frenzied laughs, and dashed  
His head against the oak !

The girls go out to reap the rye,  
190 And, as girls do, they start their songs,  
How mothers bid their sons “ good-bye ”,  
How Tartars fought the whole night long.  
They go . . . beneath a verdant oak,  
A tired horse is standing by,  
195 And near the horse, a handsome young  
Cossack and a maiden lie.  
Curious (it must be told),  
They tiptoe near to frighten them,  
But when they saw that he was killed,  
200 In sudden fear, they turned to run.

All her young friends gathered round,  
In girlish teardrops bathed,  
All his comrades gathered round,  
And started digging graves.  
205 The priests came with the holy banners,  
All the bells were tolling,



The village paid their last respects  
By custom old and holy.  
There beside the road, they raised  
210 Twin mounds among the rye.  
There was no one there to ask  
How it was they died.  
A maple and a fir they planted  
Over the young lad,  
215 And a bright-flowered guelder-rose  
At the maiden's head.  
Here the cuckoo often flies  
To call above them still ;  
Here the nightingale will fly,  
220 Each night, to sing his fill,  
Sings to his heart's content, and carols  
Till the moon has risen,  
Till, again, rusalka-babies  
Steal out from the river.

[1837(?)  
St. Petersburg.]

ДУМКА (Тече вода в сине море)

SONG

The waters flow down to the sea  
And never more return ;  
A Cossack goes to seek his fortune,  
—Fortune there is none.

- 5 The Cossack journeys far away  
Where dance the dark blue waves,—  
Like them the Cossack's heart is dancing,  
But thought speaks and says :

- “ Where do you journey, without asking?  
10 To whose care abandoned  
Father, and your dear old mother,  
And a fair young maiden?  
In foreign parts the folk are strange,  
And hard to live, indeed,  
15 Among them ;—none to share your tears,  
No one with whom to speak.”

- The Cossack sits there on the further  
Shore—the blue waves dance.  
He dreamed that he would find good fortune :  
20 Sorrow crossed his path.  
And now the cranes fly in long skeins  
Towards the further shore.  
The Cossack weeps—the beaten tracks  
Are overgrown with thorns.

[1838  
St. Petersburg.]

Думи мої, думи мої

O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts,  
I am troubled for you !  
Why have you ranged yourselves on paper  
In your ranks of sorrow?

- 5 Why did the wind not scatter you,  
Like dust-motes, in the steppe?  
Why did ill-fate not overlie  
You, her babes, while she slept?

- For ill-fate but bore you to mock and beclown you ;  
10 You were watered by tears—why did they not drown you?  
Sweep you down to the sea? Wash you into the plain?  
For no one would ask, then, what caused me to suffer,  
Nor why I curse fortune, nor why I remain  
In this world . . . For they would not have sneered : “ He has  
nothing

- 15 To do! ” in their scorn. . . .

O my flowers, my children !

For what have I loved you and watched over you?  
Is there one heart in the world to weep with you  
As I have wept? Maybe my guess will come true !

- 20 Perhaps there will be found a girl's  
Pure heart, dark eyes to pour  
Tears for these, my heartfelt thoughts,—  
I ask nothing more. . . .  
One tear from those dark eyes—and I  
25 Am lord of lords in glory !

O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts,  
I am troubled for you !

- 
- For a girl with hazel eyes,  
A maiden with dark brows,  
30 The heart was rent—and smiled again,  
Pouring forth its words ;  
Poured them forth, as best it could,  
For the night's dark shade,  
For the cherry-orchard green,

35 For a young girl's favour.  
 For the steppes and for the gravemounds,  
 There in Ukraina,  
 The heart swooned, and did not wish  
 To sing here among strangers.  
 40 Did not wish, far in this forest,  
 In the snow to gather  
 The Cossack host to council here,  
 With their staves and banners. . . .  
 Let the souls of Cossacks hover  
 45 There in Ukraina :  
 From end to end, there, it is broad  
 And joyful like that freedom  
 Which has long since passed away ;  
 Broad as a sea, the Dniipro,  
 50 Steppe and steppe, the rapids roar,  
 And gravemounds high as mountains.  
 There was born the Cossack freedom,  
 There she galloped round,  
 With Tartars and with Polish lords  
 55 She strewed the plain about  
 Till it could take no more ; with corpses  
 All the plain she strewed.  
 Freedom lay down to take her rest ;  
 Meanwhile the gravemound grew,  
 60 And high above it, as a warder,  
 Hovers the Black Eagle,  
 And minstrels come and sing about  
 The gravemound to the people.  
 They sing of all that came to pass,  
 65 Blind wretches, for they keep  
 Their wits awake. . . . And I? . . . And I  
 Know only how to weep,  
 Only tears for Ukraina,—  
 Words there now are none—  
 70 And for ill-fate, well, let it lie !  
 To whom is it unknown?  
 Hard it is for one who gazes  
 With his soul on people,  
 Hell is his, here, in this world,  
 75 But in the next. . . .  
   By grieving  
 I'll not conjure for myself  
 A fate which is not mine ;

Let miseries' throng abide for long,  
80 Them I'll deeply hide,  
The fierce serpent I shall hide  
Near my very heart,  
That enemies may never see  
How ill-fate mocks and laughs . . .  
85 Then let thought, like to a crow,  
Fly and caw indeed,  
But the heart, like a nightingale,  
Warbles sweet songs and weeps  
In secret ; people will not see,  
90 Will not, then, mock me so . . .  
Do not wipe my tears away,  
Let them freely flow,  
Let them soak this foreign field,  
Water it day and night,  
95 Until at last the priests with foreign  
Sand shall close my eyes . . .  
Thus it is ! And what to do ?  
Sorrow brings no aid.  
Who envies the poor orphan, then,  
100 Take vengeance on him, Lord.

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O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts,  
My children, O my flowers,  
I have reared, watched over you,—  
Where to send you now ?  
105 Go then to Ukraine, my children,  
To Ukraine, so dear,  
Wander on like homeless orphans,  
I shall perish here.  
There a true heart you will find,  
110 A word of kindness for you,  
There, sincerity and truth,  
And even, maybe, glory. . . .

Bid them welcome, then, my mother,  
My Ukraine, and smile  
115 On these my children, still unwise,  
As on thy own true child.

[1839  
St. Petersburg.]

## THE NIGHT OF TARAS

- At the crossroads sits a minstrel  
 Playing on his kobza ;  
 Gathered round him, boys and girls  
 Blossoming like poppies.
- 5 The minstrel plays, and sings to it,  
 Chanting out the words,  
 How the Cossacks fought the Poles,  
 The Muscovites, the Horde.  
 How the whole assembly gathered
- 10 Early on a Sunday ;  
 How they buried a young Cossack  
 In a verdant gully.  
 The minstrel plays, and sings to it,  
 And makes misfortune smile :
- 15 “ Once there was the Hetmanate—  
 It passed beyond recall ;  
 Once, it was, we ruled ourselves,  
 But we shall rule no more . . .  
 Yet we never shall forget
- 20 The Cossack fame of yore !
- A cloud comes up behind the Lyman,  
 A cloud from the plain :  
 Ukraina, mourning, grieving,—  
 Such, indeed, her fate !
- 45 Like a little child she grieves,  
 She weeps, and to her rescue  
 No one comes . . . the Cossack host  
 Fall away and perish ;  
 Fame, and the land of their fathers
- 50 Perish—and no haven . . .  
 And the scions of bold Cossacks  
 Now grow up unchristened,  
 Love in sin, unblest by marriage,  
 Priestless are interred,
- 55 And their faith is sold to Jews,

And they debarred from church.  
 While Poles and Uniates, like jackdaws  
 Covering the plain,  
 Swoop down,—to give her good advice  
 60 No one still remains.  
 Nalyvayko did come forth—  
 Then the Kravchyna vanished!  
 Cossack Pavlyuk did come forth—  
 And followed in like manner!  
 65 Taras Tryasylo then came forth,  
 With bitter tears, he said:  
 ‘My poor Ukraine all trampled down,  
 Where Polish feet now tread!’  
 21 Ukraina, Ukraina!  
 Mother, mother dearest!  
 When I but recall your fate  
 My heart is all a-weeping!  
 25 Where is the Cossack host, and where  
 Are the red jerkins scattered?  
 Where the freedom-destiny?  
 The Hetmans and their banners?  
 Where is it scattered? Burned to ashes?  
 30 Or has the blue sea drowned  
 And covered over your high hills  
 And the lofty mounds?  
 Mountains speak not, sea still dances,  
 Gravemounds sadly brood,  
 35 O’er the scions of bold Cossacks  
 Heathen men now rule.  
 Dance, then, sea! Be silent, mountains!  
 Wild wind, roam the plain!  
 Weep, you scions of bold Cossacks!  
 40 Such, indeed, your fate!  
 Taras Tryasylo then came forth,  
 Came forth the faith to save,  
 75 The grey-winged eagle then came forth,  
 And to the Poles he gave  
 Good cause to feel it! Tryasylo said:  
 ‘We have grieved long enow!  
 But let us go, my friends and brothers,  
 80 To fight the Polish foe!’

Throughout three days, throughout three nights,  
 Tryasylo fought and more,

From Lyman to Trubaylo the plain  
 Was strewn with corpses o'er.  
 85 The noble Cossack's strength was failing,  
 Grievously he sorrowed ;  
 Greatly, greatly then rejoiced  
 The heathen Koniecpolski,  
 All the nobility he gathered,  
 90 Set them all a-feasting,  
 Taras his Cossacks bold then gathered,  
 Counsel he was seeking :  
 ' Otamans and comrades bold,  
 My brothers and my sons,  
 95 Give me, pray, your good advice,  
 What should now be done.  
 The accursed Poles are feasting,  
 Like our doom, our knell. . . .'  
 ' Let them sit a-banqueting,  
 100 Feast to their good health !  
 Let the accursed sit banqueting  
 Till dusk, but mother night  
 Will counsel us. The Cossack then  
 His Polish foe will find ! '

105 The sun lay down behind the mountain,  
 And the stars came out,  
 Like a cloud, the Cossack force  
 Ringed the Poles about.  
 The moon stood high amid the sky—  
 110 The cannon roared and thundered ;  
 Sudden the Polish lordlings woke—  
 Nowhere to take cover !  
 Sudden the Polish lordlings woke—  
 But never did they rise :  
 115 The sun came up, and one and all  
 They lay there side-by-side.

Like a serpent, crimson-red,  
 The Al'ta brings the tidings,  
 Calling ravens from the plain  
 120 To eat the Polish lordlings.  
 Flying the black ravens came  
 To rouse the sleeping lords,  
 And the Cossack host assembled  
 To give thanks to God.



125 The black ravens cawed and croaked,  
Digging out the eyes,  
While bold Cossacks sang the song  
Of that bloodstained night,—  
The night which put the Poles to sleep,  
130 The night which thus became  
For Taras and the Cossack host  
Their glory and their fame.

On the plain a gravemound stands  
Black above the stream ;  
135 Where the Cossack blood once flowed  
Now the grass grows green.  
A raven sits upon the mound,  
From hunger it is cawing,  
A Cossack recalls the Hetmanate,  
140 Recalls it, and is mourning. . . .”

Grieving, the minstrel ceased, somehow  
His hands refused to play,  
And, gathered round him, boys and girls  
Wiped their tears away.

145 The minstrel went along the road,  
Suddenly, what a lay  
He starts to play, from grief ! The lads  
Dance round, he sings and plays :  
“ Let this be the way it goes !  
150 Sit there, children, by the stove,  
I, being sad, will to the inn,  
There I shall find my wife within,  
Shall find my wife, and stand a round,  
And laugh, our enemies to confound ! ”

[1839  
St. Petersburg.]

Вітер з гаєм розмовляє (ЧОВЕН)

[THE BOAT]

The wind blows, speaking with the grove,  
It whispers in the reeds,  
Down the river glides the boat,  
Lone upon the stream.  
5 On it glides, swamped by the tide,—  
No one checks its course ;  
For who is there? The fisher-lad  
Dwells in this life no more.  
It glided down to the blue sea,  
10 Which tossed it, unrestrained . . .  
The mountain-waves had sport with it—  
And not a chip remained.

It's no long path—as when a boat  
Drifts to the blue sea,—  
15 An orphan takes to foreign parts,  
And then—to misery.  
There good folk have sport with him,  
Like the chilly waves ;  
Afterwards they gaze their fill  
20 How the orphan weeps ;  
Ask : “ Where is the orphan now? ”  
—“ I've neither heard nor seen ! ”

[1841  
St. Petersburg.]

## ГАМАЛІЯ

### HAMALIYA

- “ Ah, there comes, there comes nor wind nor a wave  
 From our Ukraina !  
 Whether they are in council, how to face the Turk—  
 We hear not in this far region !  
 5 Ah, blow, wind, blow, far over the sea,  
 From the Great Meadow coming,  
 Come, dry our tears, drown the clanking of chains,  
 And scatter our longing.  
 Ah, dance, then, dance, thou azure-blue sea  
 10 Under boats where are sailing  
 The Cossacks (only their caps to be seen),  
 To this shore to save us.  
 Ah God, our God ! Even if not for us,—  
 From Ukraine do Thou bear them :  
 15 We shall hear their glory, the Cossack glory,  
 Shall hear it and perish.”

- Thus in Scutari the Cossacks were singing,  
 They sang, the poor souls, and fast their tears flowed,  
 The Cossack tears flowed, and spoke of their yearning,  
 20 Till Bosphorus trembled, for he, since his birth,  
 Had never yet heard the weeping of Cossacks ;  
 Like a grey bull he quivered throughout his wide girth,  
 Sending the waves rolling far, far away,  
 Over his ribs and to the blue sea.  
 25 And roaring the words of the Bosphorus, the sea drove  
 His message to Lyman, and Lyman to Dnipro  
 Over its waves passed the sorrowing speech.

- Our mighty grandsire roared with laughter,  
 Till his moustaches flowed with spume.  
 30 “ Asleep ? Or listening, Brother-Meadow ?  
 Sister Khortytsya ? ” Echoes boomed  
 From Meadow and Isle : “ I hear, I hear ! ”  
 Boats swarmed the Dnipro in a throng,  
 The Cossacks sang a rousing song :

35 " The Turkish Lady yonder has  
A house with fine wood floor.  
Hey! Hey! Sea, dance and play!  
Roar! Tear the cliffs away!  
We'll go as guests, for sure!

40 The Turkish Lady in her pockets  
Thalers has and ducats.  
Not to pick her pockets, no,—  
But to knife and burn we go,  
And to free our brothers!

45 The Lady janissaries has,  
A pasha on a couch.  
Ho! Ho! At the foe!  
Qualm or quaver we don't know :  
Glory and freedom's ours!"

50 Thus they sang while sailing on ;  
The sea the wild wind hears,  
Hamaliya in the prow  
Directs them how to steer.  
" Hamaliya! Valour's fleeing!  
55 The sea has grown enraged!"  
" It shall not scare us!" And they hid  
Beyond the mountain waves.

---

In the harem, in paradise, slumbers Byzantium,  
Scutari is slumbering ; Bosphorus seethes,  
60 Groaning and howling as it were a mad thing,  
Wishing to rouse Byzantium from dreams.  
" Rouse them not, Bosphorus, else you'll be mourning!  
All your white ribs I shall choke up with sand,  
I shall bury in mud!" the blue sea is roaring.  
65 " Do you not know what guests to the land  
Of the Sultan I'm carrying?" Thus the sea grumbled,  
(The bold long-mustached Slavs it loved dearly indeed).  
Bosphorus took heed. The Lady still slumbered,  
In the harem, the laggardly Sultan still dreamed.  
70 In Scutari alone, in the prison, are awake  
The poor Cossack lads. What are they watching for?  
From their fetters they pray in words simple and straight,  
And the roaring waves roll to the far, further shore.

- “ O God all-merciful of Ukraine !  
 75 Let not in foreign parts as slaves  
 Free Cossacks thus to perish, for  
 ’Twere shame both now and evermore  
 To rise up from a foreign grave,  
 Come to Thy Judgment, just and right,  
 80 With hands in irons, and in the sight  
 Of all to stand in chains and fetters  
 Is shame for Cossacks ! . . . ”  
 —“ Slash and smite !  
 Strike the faithless unbeliever ! ”  
 85 Beyond the wall. Whose is that cry ?  
 “ Hamaliya ! Valour’s fleeing !  
 Scutari is enraged.”  
 “ Slash and smite ! ” From the fort  
 He shouts in answer straight.  
 90 With cannon all Scutari’s roaring,  
 The foemen wildly roar and rage,  
 Reckless the Cossack host charge forward,  
 And janissaries tumble slain.  
  
 Hamaliya revels wildly  
 95 Through Scutari’s hell,  
 Tears the dungeon open wide,  
 Rends the chains himself.  
 “ Fly forth, grey hawks, to the bazaar,  
 To take your share of wealth ! ”  
  
 100 The falcon chicks all started, for  
 So long it was they might  
 Not hear this Christian language spoken . . .  
 And old mother night  
 Started too, she had not seen  
 105 The Cossacks pay the score.  
 Do not fear—but look upon  
 The Cossack feast ! Though all  
 Is murky like a common night  
 Yet this is no small feast.  
 110 Not robbers these, who silently  
 With Hamaliya eat  
 Fat without mutton. “ Let us have  
 Some light, boys ! ” And the flames  
 Mount cloud-high, with high-masted ships  
 115 Scutari is ablaze.

Now Byzantium blinked her eyes,  
Roused herself from sleep,  
Quickly sailed to bring them aid,  
Sailed and gnashed her teeth.

- 120 Byzantium roars and rages wildly,  
And with her hands she grasps the shore,  
Grasps, yells and rises—and once more  
In blood upon the knives grows silent.  
Scutari's like all hell ablaze,  
125 Through the bazaars spilt blood is snaking,  
To swell broad Bosphorus's waves  
Like dark birds in the wood this day,  
The Cossacks fly from place to place,  
Not a soul who can escape them,  
130 The fire-hard ones, no flame can scathe them.  
They tear the walls down ; in their caps  
The Cossacks bear off silver, gold,  
Carry it off and fill the boats.

- Scutari burns, the work dies down,  
135 The lads assemble, gathered round,  
Light their pipes there at the blaze ;  
To the boats ! And they set out,  
Shearing the red mountain-waves.  
They sail, as if they came from home,  
140 As if they sailed for pleasure,  
And as they sail, as is their way,  
The Cossacks sing together :

- “ Our good captain, Hamaliya,  
—Bold and brave is he,  
145 Gathered up his lads, departed  
Off across the sea ;  
Off across the sea,  
Famous he would be,  
And from Turkish slavery, his  
150 Brethren he would free.  
Hamaliya to Scutari  
Sailed across the water,—  
Brother Cossacks sat in prison,  
Waiting Turkish torture.  
155 ‘ Brothers,’ Hamaliya shouted,  
‘ We shall live this day,—

We shall live, drink wine, and we  
Shall janissaries slay,  
On our barracks, carpets, velvet,  
160 For a roof we'll lay ! '   
Zaporozhians went a-reaping,  
Flew into the meadow,  
Reaped the rye and stacked the stooks,  
And they sang together :  
165 ' Glory to you, Hamaliya,  
All the wide world over,  
All the wide world over,  
All through Ukraina,  
For you'd not let your comrades perish  
170 In a foreign region ! ' ”

They sail on singing, Hamaliya  
There behind them, bold, he sails,  
As an eagle guards his eaglets ;  
The wind blows from the Dardenelles,  
175 But Byzantium's not pursuing :  
She fears the Monk might be returning  
To light Galata's fires once more,  
Or Hetman Ivan Pidkova call  
Them out to sea again to skirmish.  
180 They sail on. . . . From behind the waves,  
Sun paints the waves with red ;  
Before them stretches the kind sea,  
It murmurs and resounds.

“ Hamaliya ! Winds blow freely !  
185 Soon our own sea again ! ”  
And they were hidden in the waves,  
Behind the living mountains.

[October—first half of November 1842  
On the Baltic Sea on the way to Stockholm]

## РОЗРИТА МОГИЈА

### THE PLUNDERED GRAVE

- Peaceful land, beloved country,  
O my dear Ukraine!  
Why, my mother, have they robbed you?  
Why do you thus wane?
- 5 Before the sun rose in the morning  
Did you fail to pray?  
Did you to your unsure babes  
Neglect to teach the way?  
—"I prayed, I worried, sleeping not,
- 10 Neither night nor day,  
I watched over my small children,  
Teaching them the way,  
And my flowers throve and grew,  
My children true and good,
- 15 And there was a time, indeed,  
When in this world I ruled.  
Yes, indeed, I ruled . . . O Bohdan,  
O my foolish son!  
Look you well, now, on your mother,
- 20 On Ukraine, your own,  
Who, as she rocked you, sang about  
Her unhappy fortune,  
And singing, wept a mother's tears,  
Looking out for freedom! . . .
- 25 Bohdan, O my little Bohdan!  
Had I known, in the cradle  
I'd have choked you, in my sleep  
I'd have overlain you.  
Now my steppes have all been sold,
- 30 In Jews' and Germans' hands;  
And my sons at foreign toil,  
Far in foreign lands;  
My brother, Dnipro, now runs dry  
And is deserting me;
- 35 And my dear graves the Muscovite  
Is plundering utterly.  
Let him dig and excavate,



He does not seek his own . . .  
And meanwhile, let the renegades  
40 Wax in strength and grow,  
Let them help the Muscovite  
Be lord and master there,  
And from their mother her old smock,  
Patched and worn, to tear!  
45 Help them to torment, you brutes,  
Your mother—do not spare!”

Quartered, dug, and excavated,  
Gravemound torn and plundered . . .  
What have they been seeking there,  
50 What was buried under  
It by the old fathers? If . . .  
If they had but found what lay hidden there beneath it,  
Then the children would not weep, the mother cease her  
grieving.

9.x.1843  
Berezan'.

Чигрине, Чигрине

[CHYHYRYN]

- Chyhyryn, O Chyhyryn!  
All things must come to naught  
On earth, and now thy holy glory  
Is borne like a mote  
5 Upon the cold blast of the winds,  
Lost in the cloud. There fly  
Year after year above the earth,  
Dniπρο itself runs dry,  
The gravemounds crumble into dust,  
10 The lofty mounds, thy erstwhile  
Glory;—and of thee, thyself,  
Thou dotard, old and feeble,  
No one will even say a word,  
No one will point the place  
15 Where thou once didst stand, nor why . . .  
Not even in jest would say!  
Why with the Poles did we once fight?  
Engage the Hordes with slashing knives?  
Why did we harrow with our pikes  
20 Muscovite ribs? There once we sowed,  
And well we watered with red blood,  
With sabres harrowed what was sown.  
But in that field what crop has grown?  
Rue, rue has grown,  
25 And choked our freedom down.
- 

- And I, on thy ruins, demented, remain  
And uselessly pour out my tears. But Ukraine  
Has fallen asleep, mould-grown, covered in weeds,  
Set her heart there to rot in the mud, in a puddle,  
30 Let in poisonous snakes to a tree-trunk's cold hollow,  
To her children a hope in the steppe she bequeathed,  
But that hope . . .  
The wind scattered over the plain,  
The waves swept it over the seas.

35 Then let the wind bear all away  
In its untrammelled flight,  
And let the heart then weep and pray :  
On this earth—holy right !

---

Chyhyryn, O Chyhyryn,  
40 Thou alone my friend !  
Thou wast robbed of all while sleeping :  
Forestland and steppe  
And all Ukraine ! Sleep on then, swathed  
By Jewry, till the sun  
45 Rises, till these foolish lads,  
The Hetmans, are full-grown.  
Having said my prayers, I too  
Would sleep, but my cursed thoughts  
Struggle to set my soul afire,  
50 Strive to rend my heart.  
Do not rend, thoughts, do not burn !  
I shall bring back, maybe,  
My truth, all fortuneless, my words  
Spoken quietly ;  
55 Perhaps, indeed, I yet may forge  
A new blade from it, make a  
Keen new share for the old plough,  
And, sweating out the acres,  
Maybe I'll plough that fallow land,  
60 And on the fallow, there  
I shall scatter all my tears,  
Sow my heartfelt tears.  
Maybe they will shoot and grow  
Into two-edged blades  
65 That will cleave the evil, rotten  
Sickly heart, will drain  
From it all the poisoned blood,  
And in its place will pour  
Into it living Cossack blood,  
70 Holy, clean and pure ! . . .

Maybe, maybe . . . and there between,  
Between the knives will grow  
The periwinkle and the rue,  
And words, forgotten now,  
75 My own words, gentle-voiced and sad,

Quiet and God-fearing,  
Will be remembered, and a girl's heart,  
Tremulous and timid,  
Will quiver like a little fish,  
80 And she will remember  
Me too, then . . . O my words, my tears,  
O thou that art my heaven !

Sleep, Chyhyryn, and let thy children  
Under foemen perish !  
85 Sleep on, O Hetman, till there rise  
In this world truth and justice.

19.ii.1844  
Moscow.

THE DREAM  
A COMEDY

The spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive,  
because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. . . .  
John xiv. 17.

To every man his destiny,  
His path before him lies,  
One man builds, one pulls to ruins,  
One, with greedy eyes,  
5 Looks far out, past the horizon,  
Whether there remains  
Some country he can seize and bear  
With him to his grave;  
That one his own kinsman robs  
10 By card-play in his home,  
One, crouching in the corner, whets  
His knife against his own  
Brother, and that one, quiet and sober,  
Pious and God-fearing,  
15 Would creep up like a kitten, wait  
Until the time you're having  
Some trouble, and then drive his claws  
Deep into your liver—  
Useless to implore—for neither  
20 Wife nor babes will move him.  
One, generous and opulent,  
Builds churches everywhere,  
And so much loves "the Fatherland",  
So deeply for it cares,  
25 And with such skill he draws away  
The poor thing's blood like water!  
And the brethren, looking on,  
Their eyes wide with wonder,  
Like lambs: "Let it be so!" they say,  
30 "Perhaps it should be thus!"  
It should be thus! For there is no  
Lord in heaven above!  
And you fall beneath the yoke,

Wishing still for some  
35 Paradise in the hereafter . . .  
There is none, is none!  
Useless labour! Stop and think:  
All on this earth,—no matter  
Be they tsars' or beggars' children—  
40 Are the sons of Adam!  
And that one, too. . . . And that . . .  
And I?

This is what I must be,  
Good people: Sundays and weekdays I  
Amuse myself and feast:  
45 And you are bored and envy me . . .  
I swear I do not hear you!  
You needn't even shout! I drink  
*My* blood, not other people's.

---

So, late one night, clutching the fence,  
50 Drunk from a banquet I went home,  
So thinking as I went along,  
Till to the house I dragged my steps.  
At home the children do not cry—  
No wife is nagging,  
55 It's quiet as heaven,  
And all around God's blessings lie,  
In home and in heart.  
I lay down—and once fast  
Asleep, a drunkard, I declare,  
60 Even if guns rolled past,  
Would not twitch a hair.

And then a dream, a dream amazing  
Came into my slumbers:  
The sob'rest man would be a drunkard,  
65 A Jewish miser'd not mind paying,  
To see such marvels with his eyes.  
Not on your life!  
I see: it seems as if there flies  
An owl above the rivers, fields and thickets,  
70 Above the deep ravines and valleys,  
Above the steppe-land's broad expanses,  
Above the gulleys;  
And after, after it I fly,

And bid the earth a last goodbye.

- 75 “Farewell, world! And farewell, earth,  
Farewell, land unkind!  
All my grief and torment I  
In the cloud shall hide.  
As for you, my dear Ukraine,  
80 Widow without fortune!  
I shall fly to you, to speak  
With you from the clouds, and  
Seek your counsel, speaking sadly,  
Quietly with you,  
85 I shall fall on you at midnight  
Like the abundant dew.  
Then together we'll take counsel,  
Grieving for our woe,  
Till the sun rise, till your babes  
90 Rise up against the foe.  
Farewell, then, my dearest mother  
Widow poor and grieving!  
Feed your children: with the Lord  
Of Heaven truth yet is living!”
- 95 We fly . . . I look: the dawn is glimmering,  
The skyline is ablaze,  
In a dark grove a nightingale  
Greets the sun with praise.  
A gentle breeze blows quietly,  
100 The steppes, the cornfields glimmer,  
Among ravines, by lakes there gleams  
The green blush of the willows;  
Orchards bow down, richly laden,  
Poplars, standing straight  
105 Like sentinels, in the open land  
Are speaking with the plain.  
And all around me, the whole country,  
Mantled round in beauty,  
Shimmers green and bathes herself  
110 In the morning dew,  
From the dawn of time, she bathes  
Herself and greets the sun,  
There is nowhere a beginning,  
Ending there is none.

115 No one has power to add to it,  
 No one may destroy it,  
 And all around. . . . My soul! My soul!  
 Why are you not joyful?  
 Why, my poor soul, are you sad?  
 120 Why so vainly weeping?  
 What are you so sorry for? "But do you not see it?  
 Do you not hear how the people are weeping?  
 Look, then, and see! Meanwhile, I shall fly, speeding  
 High, high above, through the blue-clouded heavens,  
 125 Where there are no rulers, where there is no vengeance,  
 Where comes no sound of man's laughter or tears.  
 See there—in that paradise you are now quitting,  
 They tear off the patched ragged coat of a cripple,  
 Tear it off with the skin, for they lack, it appears,  
 130 Shoes for young princelings. And there a poor widow  
 For poll-tax is crucified, and her one dear  
 Son, her one child, her one hope, must be seized,  
 Handcuffed, and put in the army—he's missing,  
 You see, from the total they need . . . And there, under  
 135 The fence (while its serf-mother reaps for her master),  
 A child, starved and swollen, is dying of hunger.  
 And yonder—do you see—Eyes, eyes!  
 What are you good for? Why  
 Have you not shrivelled up from childhood,  
 140 All your tears run dry?  
 Here by the fence, a ruined girl  
 Limpis footsore with her bastard,  
 Father and mother both renounced her,  
 To strangers she's an outcast,  
 145 Old beggars shun her . . . The young lord  
 Knows naught; still under age,  
 Squanders away his serfs on drink  
 With his twentieth flame."

Does God see from behind His cloud  
 150 Our tears and suffering?  
 Maybe He does see it, too—  
 But the help He brings—  
 Like that of ancient mountains, watered  
 With the blood of men! . . .  
 155 O my poor, unhappy soul,  
 How you cause me pain!  
 Let us drink poison, and lie down



In the ice to sleep,  
Let us even unto God  
160 Send thought, and answer seek :  
How long will hangmen in this world  
Their dominion keep?

Fly then, my thought, my suffering so bitter !  
And take away with you all evils, all troubles,  
165 For they're your companions ! You grew up with them,  
Their heavy hands swaddled you, dearly they loved you,  
And you loved them dearly. Go, gather them, fly,  
And then scatter the horde across the great sky.  
May it grow black, may it grow red,  
170 Blow and fan the flames,  
Once more may serpents be belched forth,  
The earth be strewn with slain,  
And without you, somewhere I  
Shall hide my heart,—and then  
175 I'll seek some realm of paradise,  
Far at the world's end.

Once more above the earth I fly,  
Once more to her I bid goodbye.  
It is hard to leave a mother  
180 In a roofless shack,  
But it is worse to look upon  
Her tears and tattered rags. . . .

I fly, I fly, a cold wind blows,  
Before me spread white drifts of snows ;  
185 Around me woods and swamplands stretch  
Mist, mist and emptiness . . .  
No human sound,—here no trace can  
Be seen of the dread foot of man. . . .

“ Both enemies and friends—farewell,  
190 Farewell ! I shall not come  
To be your guest. Feast ! drink your fill !  
I'll hear no more,—Alone  
For endless ages I shall sleep  
The long night in the snow,  
195 And, until you have discovered  
There's a country left  
Still undrenched by tears and blood,

I shall take my rest . . .

Take my rest. . . .”

- 200                                Yet hark, I hear  
Fetters clank and rattle  
Beneath the earth. Let me see . . .  
O wicked, wicked people!  
Whence have you come? Why this toil?  
205 What, then, are you seeking  
Beneath the earth? No! Maybe I'll  
Hide no more, not even  
In heaven! Why this punishment?  
Why am I tormented?  
210 What harm have I done any man?  
Whose harsh hands have fettered  
My soul fast in my body, fired  
My heart, and sent my thoughts  
Scattering around,  
215 Like a flock of daws?  
I'm punished, but I know not why,  
Punished bitterly!  
When shall I expiate it? When?  
When will the end be?  
220 I neither know nor see.

- The desert wilderness has stirred . . .  
As from a coffin's narrow girth  
For the last Judgment-day of doom,  
The dead are rising for the truth.  
225 These are not the dead, the slain,  
They come not seeking Judgment-day:  
No! They are people, living people,  
Put in irons, they draw  
Gold up out of holes, to pour it  
230 Down the Glutton's maw,  
The Imperial Gullet. These are convicts!  
And what for? The Almighty  
Knows the reason, or, maybe,  
He's not yet noticed either!  
235 Yonder there a branded thief  
Drags his chains, and there  
A tortured robber grinds his teeth,  
Longing to knife his friend,  
Who, himself, could only just

- 240 Escape from execution.  
Among them, the old lags, in chains  
Is the King of freedom,  
The King of all the world, the King  
Wearing a brand for crown.
- 245 In torment, in hard labour, he  
Pleads not, nor weeps, nor groans . . .  
Once the heart is warmed by goodness,  
Cold it will never grow.

Where, then, are your thoughts, your rosy-pink flowers?  
250 Well-cared-for and brave, those dear children of yours?  
To whom, then, to whom, my friend, did you give them?  
Or perhaps in your heart for all ages you hid them?  
Do not hide them, my brother! But scatter them far!  
They will germinate, grow,—and go into the world.

- 255 Enough? Do torments yet remain?  
Enough, enough, for it is cold,—  
And frost stirs up the brain.

Once more I fly. The earth grows dark.  
Brain drowns. Fear is in the heart.

260 I see : along the roadsides—houses—  
Cities with a hundred churches,  
And in the cities, set like storks,  
Muscovite soldiers forming fours :  
Well-fed, with leather

265 Boots and fetters,  
On parade. I look a bit  
Further : there, as in a pit,  
The city gleams below me far  
Set on a gigantic marsh.

270 Above, black mist-clouds hover thickly.  
I reach it.—Endless city.  
Turkish? Or  
German for sure?  
Or, maybe, even Muscovite!

275 Palaces and churches,  
Pot-bellied worthies,  
—Nowhere a *simple* house emerges!

It was growing dark. Like fire,  
It blazed up all about,

280 I even grew afraid. . . . "Hourra!  
 Hourra!" they raised a shout.  
 "Hush, you fools! Come to your senses!  
 Why are you so gay?  
 That you're on fire?" "The bumpkin, lo!  
 285 He knows not the parade!  
 'Tis a parade! For *He* this day  
 To take his revels deigns."  
 "But where is *She*, that marvel, then?"  
 "Seest there the palace, hey?"  
 290 I pushed on in, till, thank the Lord,  
 A fellow-countryman,  
 Tin-buttoned, recognized and spoke  
 To me: "Whence hast thou come?"  
 "From Ukraine." "How thus is it  
 295 Thou knowest not to converse  
 The local parlance!" "Not at all!  
 I *can* speak," I observe,  
 "But I don't want to." "'Tis, indeed,  
 A curious fool! I know  
 300 How everywhere to enter, being  
 In service here; an so  
 Thou wish, I'll try within the palace  
 To bring thee. Only do  
 Not begrudge a tip,—we, friend,  
 305 Are enlightened!" "Off with you,  
 Foul inkpot!" And invisible  
 Once more, I hid from sight,  
 So pushed my way into the palace.  
 God of endless might!  
 310 A paradise indeed! For here  
 Even the very spongers  
 Are all gold-smothered! And, behold,  
 Tall and grimly sullen  
*He* strides out, and at his side  
 315 The Tsarina comes, poor thing,  
 Like a dried-up mushroom, lanky,  
 And all bone and skin  
 And moreover, the poor creature,  
 Troubled with the Twitch.  
 320 So this is what the goddess is!  
 Gracious! You poor wretch!  
 And I, poor fool, not having seen  
 You even once, you marvel,

- Was even ready to believe  
 325 Your poetasters' drivel!  
 What a fool! A dunderhead!  
 I trusted on my life  
 A Muscovite! Go, read, and then  
 Believe them if you like!
- 330 After the divinities  
 Come the crowds of nobles  
 In gold and silver! Just like fattened  
 Boars, bigmugged and bloated!  
 They get quite sweaty, pushing, shoving,  
 335 So that they can gain  
 A nearer place to Them: Maybe  
 They'll hit them, or else deign  
 To cock a snook—even a small one,  
 Even a half-snook, if it's only  
 340 Straight at their own mug—  
 They've got themselves ranged in a row,  
 As if without a tongue,  
 Not a murmur! . . . the tsar jabbers,  
 And that tsarina-wonder,  
 345 Like a heron among birds,  
 Hops round, gathering courage.
- For quite a while, like puffed-up owls,  
 The pair walked back and forth,  
 Discussing something in low voices  
 350 (One could not hear, far off)—  
 About "the Fatherland", it seemed,  
 And the new gorgets, and  
 About the even newer drill-rules;  
 Then the tsarina sat  
 355 Down silently upon a stool.  
 I look: the tsar comes up  
 To the most senior in rank—  
 And swipes him round the mug!  
 With all his might! The poor chap licked  
 360 His lips, then punched the belly  
 Of his subordinate till it echoed . . .  
 The latter a still lesser  
 Ace hit between the shoulders; he—  
 A lesser; and the lesser  
 365 A smaller one, and he the petty;

And beyond the threshold  
The petty ran with all their might  
Through the streets, and knead  
The remnants of the orthodox,  
370 Who start to yell and scream  
And shout and roar : “ He’s revelling!  
Our Little Father, our dear Tsar,  
Revels! Hourra! Hourra! Hourra-aa!”

I roared with laughter! Why, what else?  
375 And I, too, with the rest  
Caught quite a bit. Before the dawn  
They all went off to rest.  
Only in the corners, groaned  
Believers here and there,  
380 And, groaning, for the Little Father  
Made to God a prayer.  
Laughter and tears! And then to see  
The city I went out,  
For night is there like day. I look :  
385 Palaces all about,  
Palaces over the quiet river,  
And the bank is faced  
All in stone. And like a half-wit  
I am quite amazed :  
390 How did it all come to pass,  
That such a swamp was built  
Into this wonder? Here what floods  
Of human blood were spilt,  
Even without a knife! Across  
395 On the further bank  
A fortress and a belfry, like  
A whetted awl,—it stands  
Strange to look at. The clock jingles.  
I turn around—and lo!  
400 The horse is charging, with its hooves  
It breaks the rock below.  
And on the horse there rides bare-back,  
In coat—but yet not coat,  
Without a hat; some sort of leaves  
405 Bind his head about.  
The horse is rearing! Wait, just wait,  
It will jump the river.  
And he stretches out his hand,

As, it would seem, he wishes  
 410 To seize the whole world. Well, who is it?  
 So I go and read  
 What is forged on to the rock :  
 This miracle, indeed,  
 " The Second to the First " erected.  
 415 Now at once I see :  
 It is that *First* who crucified  
 Our poor Ukraina,  
 And the *Second* gave the death-stroke  
 To the prostrate widow.  
 420 Executioners, cannibals !  
 They ate their fill, that pair !  
 Stole to their hearts' content ! And what  
 With them did they bear  
 To the next world ? My heart grew heavy,  
 425 Heavy, as I were reading  
 The history of Ukraine. I stand there  
 Stock-still, without moving.  
 And meanwhile softly, very softly,  
 Something unseen and grieving,  
 430 Invisible, was singing there :  
  
 " From the city, out from Hlukhiv,  
 Went the regiments,  
 With their spades to man the earthworks.  
 And I, too, was sent  
 435 To the capital as proxy  
 Hetman to command  
 The Cossack troops. O God of mercy !  
 O thou evil tsar !  
 Accursed tsar, insatiate,  
 440 Perfidious serpent, what  
 Have you done, then, with the Cossacks ?  
 You have filled the swamps  
 With their noble bones ! And then  
 Built the capital  
 445 On their tortured corpses, and  
 In a dark dungeon cell  
 You slew me, too, me, a free Hetman,  
 In chains, with hunger martyred ! . . .  
 Tsar, O tsar ! Not even God  
 450 Himself can ever part us,  
 Me from you ; with strongest fetters

You are chained for ever  
 To me. But my heart is sad  
 To hover above Neva!  
 455 Ukraina, far away,  
 Perhaps does not exist . . .  
 I would fly and gaze on her,  
 But God will not permit.  
 Maybe Moscow burned her down,  
 460 And drained away the Dniπρο  
 Into the blue sea, and dug  
 The high mounds through to rob  
 Our glory? God all-merciful!  
 Take pity on us, God!"  
 465 And it grew silent. Then I look :  
 And a snow-white cloud  
 Cloaks the grey sky : and in this cloud  
 —As if a wild beast howled  
 In a wood. It was no cloud,  
 470 But white birds that descended  
 Down upon that brazen tsar,  
 And mournfully lamented :  
 " And we, too, are chained to you,  
 Dragon, cannibal!  
 475 And upon the Judgment Day  
 'Tis we that shall conceal  
 God from your insatiate eyes.  
 You from Ukraina  
 Drove us, naked, starving, to  
 480 The snows of foreign regions,  
 Cut our throats, and from our skins  
 Sewed yourself a purple  
 Robe, with thread of toughened sinews ;  
 Clad in this new mantle  
 485 Founded your capital! Behold!  
 Palaces and churches!  
 Rejoice, fierce executioner,  
 Accursed, O accursed!"

---

The birds flew away and scattered.  
 490 The bright sun was rising ;  
 And I stood there in amazement  
 Till I grew quite frightened.  
 The poor already were astir,  
 Hastening to their toil,



495 At the cross-roads—Moscow's troops  
 Already at their drill,  
 On the pavements drowsy girls  
 Hastened, they did not come  
 From home—but going back, for mother  
 500 Sent them out from home  
 To labour through the live-long night,  
 And thus to earn their bread.  
 And as I stand hunched, pondering,  
 The thought comes to my head :  
 505 " How hard the means that folk must take  
 To earn their daily bread ! "

There the Civil Service swarms  
 To the Ministries,  
 To sign and scribble documents  
 510 And, at the same time, fleece  
 Father and brother. My compatriots  
 Too, may be observed,  
 Here and there ; they carry on  
 In Russian, laugh, and curse  
 515 Their parents who'd not had them taught  
 To jabber, while still children,  
 The German language, so that now  
 They would not be ink-pickled. . . .  
 Leeches, leeches ! For, maybe,  
 520 Your father had to sell  
 His last cow to the Jews, till he  
 Could teach you Russian well ! . . .  
 Ukraina, Ukraina,  
 These are thy children, think !  
 525 These are thy own fair young flowers,  
 Watered well by ink,  
 And by Muscovite henbane  
 In German hothouse stifled ! . . .  
 Weep, then, widow Ukraina,  
 530 Weep for thou art childless !

Should I, maybe, go and look  
 In the tsar's palaces  
 To see what's happening there? I come—  
 Pot-bellied officers  
 535 Stand in a wheezing, snorting row,  
 Puffing out their cheeks,  
 Like turkeys, and towards the doors

Furtively they peep  
 From the corners of their eyes.  
 540 Doors opened—from his cave,  
 It seemed, a bear came rambling out—  
 But hardly could he make  
 His legs move—puffed up, even blue,  
 And an accursed hangover  
 545 Tortures him. Suddenly he shouts  
 At the extra-rotund  
 Pot-bellied ones—and one and all  
 Pot-bellies disappear  
 Into the earth—he made his eyes  
 550 Pop out—all shook with fear  
 Who still remained. Like one possessed,  
 He rages at the lesser,  
 And they go underneath the earth,  
 He rages at the petty,  
 555 And they are gone. He moves near  
 The household,—they are gone.  
 He nears the guard;—the little guardsmen  
 Give a heavy groan  
 And go into the earth! Great wonders  
 560 Came to pass! I stare  
 Wondering what will happen next,  
 What my little bear  
 Will do? But he just stands and stands  
 And his head is hanging,  
 565 Poor creature. But then where has all his  
 Bearish nature vanished?  
 Like a kitten—and so comic!  
 I laughed, as well I might!  
 He heard that, and at top blast  
 570 He bellowed—I took fright  
 At that . . . and I awoke.  
 And such  
 Was my dream of wonder!  
 Strange indeed! For only a  
 575 Madman or a drunkard  
 Dreams such a dream. And so, dear friends,  
 Be not astonished, for  
 I have not told my own tale, but  
 What in my dream I saw.

8.vii.1844  
 St. Petersburg.

Чого мені тяжко

- Why weighs the heart heavy? Why drags life so dreary?  
Why is the heart weeping and sobbing and wailing  
As a child cries from hunger? Heart, heavy and weary,  
What do you long for? Why are you ailing?  
5 Are you longing for food or for drink or repose?  
Slumber, my heart, for eternity sleeping,  
Uncovered and shattered. . . . Let hateful people  
Rage on. . . . O my heart, let your eyes gently close! . . .

13.xi.1844  
St. Petersburg.

Не завидуй багатому

- Have no envy for the rich man,  
For he never knows  
Naught of friendship nor of love—  
He must hire all those.  
5 Have no envy for the mighty,  
For he must compel;  
Have no envy for the famous  
For he knows full well  
That it is not him men love  
10 But his bitter fame  
Which he poured out to please from blood  
And tears of bitter pain.  
And the young folk when they meet,  
All is quiet and bliss  
15 As in paradise—but see :  
Something stirs amiss.

- Have envy, then, for nobody;  
Look round—and you will never  
Find paradise upon this earth,  
20 Nor, indeed, in heaven.

4.x.1845  
Myrhorod.

# ВЕЛИКИЙ ЛЬОХ

## THE GREAT VAULT

### A MYSTERY PLAY

Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

Ps.xliv 13-14.

## I

### THREE SOULS

Like snow, three little birds came flying  
Through Subotiv, and alighting  
On an old church's leaning cross  
They settled : " God will pardon us !  
5 Not human, now, we souls are birds . . .  
From here we'll easier observe  
How they will excavate the Vault.  
The sooner it is dug and broken,  
The sooner heaven will be opened.  
10 For thus to Peter spake the Lord :  
' Thou wilt admit them into heaven,  
When all by Muscovites is stolen,  
And they have opened the Great Vault.' "

#### FIRST SOUL :

When I was of human-kind,  
15 Prisyа was my name ;  
And this village was my birthplace,  
Here I grew, I came  
Here to play, in this same churchyard  
Joined the children's fun,  
20 Playing blind-man's-buff with Yurus',  
With the Hetman's son.  
And the Hetman's wife would come ;  
And to the house she'd call us,  
Where that barn is now, and give me  
25 Figs and raisins luscious,

And all good things, and in her arms  
 She'd carry me and pet me,  
 And when, sometimes, from Chyhyryn  
 Guests came with the Hetman,  
 30 Then they'd send for me, and dress me  
 In fine clothes and slippers,  
 And the Hetman'd carry me  
 In his arms and kiss me.  
 And so, here, in Subotiv,  
 35 I grew up and blossomed,  
 Like a flower, and everyone  
 Made me loved and welcomed.  
 And to no one did I ever  
 Say an evil word.  
 40 And a pretty girl I was,  
 Indeed, I had dark brows!  
 All the lads came courting me,  
 Of marriage they were speaking,  
 And, of course, betrothal towels  
 45 I had started weaving.  
 I was just about to give them  
 When evil struck unseen.  
 Early on that Sunday morning,  
 On St. Philip's E'en,  
 50 I ran out to fetch some water  
 (Long years back, that well  
 Grew all silted and ran dry,  
 But I fly on still),  
 I looked : the Hetman and his elders . . .  
 55 I drew the water there,  
 And with full pails I crossed their path ;  
 But I was unaware  
 He was going to Pereyaslav  
 To swear Moscow fealty,  
 60 And I could only carry home  
 With great difficulty  
 That same water. . . . And the pails,  
 Why did I not destroy them?  
 Father, mother, self and brother  
 65 And the dogs I poisoned  
 With that ever-cursed water !  
 And for that I'm stricken,  
 For that, sisters, they will not  
 Permit me into heaven.

SECOND SOUL :

- 70 As for me, my dearest sisters,  
I am still debarred,  
For I watered once the horse  
Of the Moscow tsar  
In Baturyn ; from Poltava
- 75 Home he was returning . . .  
I was still a thoughtless girl  
When glorious Baturyn  
Was fired by Moscow in the night,  
And Chechel' by her slain,
- 80 And both old and young she took  
And drowned them in the Seym . . .  
And I fell, right in the very  
Palace of Mazeppa,  
Lay among the corpses. Near,
- 85 My sister and my mother,  
Murdered in each other's arms,  
Lying there beside me.  
Only with the greatest effort  
Could the men divide me
- 90 From my lifeless mother. But  
However much I prayed  
The captain of the Muscovites  
To kill me too. . . . Still they  
Would not kill me, but released me
- 95 For the men's amusement . . .  
Somehow I got away and hid  
In the burned-out ruins . . .  
In Baturyn, just one house  
Alone, unharmed, survived,
- 100 And in this house they made the tsar  
A billet for the night,  
On his journey from Poltava.  
Bringing water, I  
Went up to the house, and *he*
- 105 Beckoned me, and signed  
That I should water him his horse,  
*And I watered it :*  
I did not know, then, that so gravely,  
Gravely I had sinned . . .
- 110 I could hardly reach the house,  
And at the door fell dead.  
The next day, when the tsar had gone,

I was laid to rest  
 By an old woman who'd stayed back  
 115 In the burned-out wreckage,  
 She it was who'd welcomed me  
 To the roofless cottage.  
 Next day, she died too, and lay  
 In the house unburied,  
 120 For there was none to bury her  
 Left now in Baturyn . . .  
 Long years back, they pulled the house down,  
 And the carved king-beam  
 They burned to charcoal. . . . Yet, till now  
 125 Over the ravines,  
 Over the steppes of the Cossacks,  
 On and on I've flown ;  
 And for what they punish me,  
 Myself I do not know !  
 130 Maybe for this—that everyone  
 I would serve and honour,  
 And to the tsar of Muscovy's  
 Horse I once gave water.

**THIRD SOUL :**

And in Kaniv I was born ;  
 135 To speak I'd still not learned,  
 Swaddled, in her arms, my mother  
 Carried me around,  
 When Catherine the tsarina came  
 To Kaniv on the Dnipro,  
 140 And on a hill my mother sat  
 With me, in an oak-grove.  
 I was weeping ; I don't know  
 Whether I was hungry,  
 Or whether (I was very young)  
 145 Just then something hurt me.  
 Mother was amusing me,  
 She looked upon the river,  
 And she pointed out to me  
 The royal barge, all gilded  
 150 Like a splendid mansion, there  
 Princes, lords and governors  
 In the barge, and the tsarina  
 Sat in state among them.  
 And I looked on her—and smiled—

155 And my soul had fled,  
And my mother died . . . and in a single  
Grave we both were laid.  
This is why, my dearest sisters,  
I am being punished,  
160 For so long from Purgatory  
Even I've been banished !  
How should I, a swaddled baby,  
Know this tsarina reigned  
As a hungry she-wolf, the fierce  
165 Enemy of Ukraine?  
Sisters, please explain !

---

“Dusk is falling, let us fly  
To pass the night in Chuta,  
So that, should something come to pass,  
170 We still may hear it, yonder.”

The little white birds started up,  
And to the wood took flight,  
There, on a branchlet of an oak,  
They perched to pass the night.

## II

### THREE CROWS

FIRST CROW :

175 Kr-rr, Kr-rr, Kr-rr !  
Bohdan cribbed crocks  
And carted to Kyiv,  
And sold to crooks  
The crocks he cribbed.

SECOND CROW :

180 I have been in Paris.  
There I drank away three zloty  
With Radziwill and Potocki.

THIRD CROW (*speaking Russian throughout*) :

Over bridge t'e devil goes,  
Goat goes over vater :  
185 Comes disaster ! Comes disaster !

---



Cawing thus, three crows came flying  
From three directions, and alighting  
On a beacon on a mound  
In the wood, they settled down,  
190 All puffed, as if in frosty weather,  
They sat and looked, one to the other,  
Like three old sisters, withered crones  
Who've spent their spinsterhood together,  
Until with moss they're overgrown.

FIRST CROW :

195 This for you, and this for you !  
I have just been flying  
To Siberia, where from one  
Decembrist I have stolen  
A scrap of gall ; See, here it is,  
200 A bite to break your fast !  
Well, in your Muscovy, is there aught  
To feed oneself at last ?  
Or, not a single dam' thing still ?

THIRD CROW :

Sister, ve 'ave many.  
205 T'ree Ukases I 'ave cawed,  
For a single roadway.

FIRST CROW :

Which road was it? For the iron one?  
Well, you've worked in style !

THIRD CROW :

Yes, six t'ousand souls I stifled  
210 In a single mile.

FIRST CROW :

Don't lie, for there were only five,  
With Von Korf helping too !  
And she boasts and swanks about  
What outsiders do !  
215 O you smoke-dried cabbage-eater !  
And you, gracious madam,  
You've been feasting, then, in Paris ?  
You accursed heathen !

You've spilled blood in a mere river  
220 And *you* only drove  
Your nobles to Siberia  
Yet how puffed up you've grown!  
See, what a majestic peacock!

SECOND AND THIRD :

And what have *you* done?

FIRST CROW :

225 What right is it of yours to ask me!  
You were still unborn  
When I played inn-keeper here,  
Drawing blood by quarts.  
Look at them! Yes, they have read  
230 Karamzin, of course!  
And they think: 'how fine we are!'  
Nitwits—hold your tongue!  
Crippled and unfeathered birds,  
You are still half grown!

SECOND CROW :

235 What a touch-me-not she is!  
Not this one's up early,  
Who's still drunk at dawn, but one  
Who's slept it off already!

FIRST CROW :

Could you have got drunk without me,  
240 With your Latin prelates?  
You've got no dam' skill—I burned down  
Poland with her monarchs.  
And for all you did—you gossip!—  
She would yet be standing!  
245 As for the free Cossacks—well,  
They had quite a thrashing!  
To whom have I not hired them out?  
To whom have I not sold them?  
But how unkillable they are,  
250 Damned things! I thought, with Bohdan  
I had almost buried them . . .  
No, up they rose—fate damn them—  
With the Swedish vagabond,  
And what events occurred then

- 255 I grow still fiercer to recall! . . .  
 Then I burned Baturyn;  
 Near Romny I dammed the Sula  
 With officers alone  
 From the Cossack force, with simple  
 260 Cossacks I have sown  
 Finland over, piled them up  
 By the Orel' in mounds,  
 And to Ladoga have driven  
 Them in countless crowds.  
 265 On the tsar's behalf, the swamps  
 And marshy land I stopped up  
 And I strangled in the dungeon  
 Far-famed Polubotok.  
 What a festival that was!  
 270 Hell itself took fright,  
 And the Irzhavets' Madonna  
 Wept salt tears that night!

THIRD CROW :

- I too 'ave lived it good!  
 Vit' t'e Tartars I stirred mud!  
 275 Vit' t'e Torturer gobbled up!  
 Vit' Peterkin got drunk  
 And to t'e Germans sold t'e lot!

FIRST CROW :

- And this you couldn't have done better!  
 So neatly into German fetters  
 280 You've bound the Russkies, that one may  
 Lie down and sleep the time away!  
 And only the fiend knows for sure  
 What my lot are waiting for!  
 Already I've forced serfdom on them,  
 285 A frightful lot of petty gentry  
 I've reared in uniforms aplenty,  
 As numerous as lice I've bred,  
 All of 'em m'lords, the Bastards,  
 And with Fritzes now that ghastly  
 290 Sich is overgrown and spread.  
 The Muscovite, too, no beginner!  
 He knows just how to warm his fingers.  
 I may be fierce—but all the same  
 I cannot bring to pass that

295 Which in Ukraine the Muscovites  
 Are doing to the Cossacks.  
 Now look! They'll print a Ukase soon :  
 " By God's abounding Mercy,  
 Both you are Ours and all is Ours,  
 300 Both worthy and unworthy."  
 Already they are bustling round,  
 Seeking in the graves  
 " Antiquities ", for in the houses  
 Naught is left to take,—  
 305 They've made a lovely job of plundering  
 Everything, but the devil  
 Knows why they are making such  
 Hasten about this frightful  
 Vault. Had they waited just a while  
 310 The church would fall down too,  
 Then in " The Bee " they could describe  
 Both in the same review.

**SECOND AND THIRD :**

Why, then, have you summoned us?  
 Upon the Vault to gaze?

**FIRST CROW :**

315 The Vault as well! Moreover, two  
 Marvels will come to pass :  
 In Ukraine this night, a pair  
 Of twins are to be born.  
 One of them, like old Gonta, will  
 320 Torture the torturers,  
 The other, though, will bring them aid  
 (And this one is ours)!  
 Already in the womb he bites,  
 And I have read it all,  
 325 How, when that Gonta will grow up,  
 All that is ours will fall.  
 He will plunder all that's good,  
 Nor will he spare his brother,  
 All Ukraine with truth and freedom  
 330 He will scatter over.  
 And so, dear sisters, you will see  
 What here they're making ready,  
 For torturers and all good things  
 They are preparing fetters.

THIRD CROW :

335 I vit' melted gold upon  
'Is eyes vill pour it t'ick.

FIRST CROW :

He'll have no desire for gold,  
The cursed lunatic !

THIRD CROW :

Vit' Imperial appointments  
340 I vill 'andcuff 'im.

SECOND CROW :

All evils and all tortures I  
From the whole world will bring.

FIRST CROW :

No, no, dear sisters, that is not  
The way it should be done,  
345 While men are blind, he must be buried,  
Else ill-fate will come.  
Look, there high over Kyiv town  
A comet's tail is spreading,  
And near the Dnipro and Tyasmyn  
350 The earth has quaked and trembled.  
Do you hear? The mountain groaned  
Over Chyhyryn . . .  
O, all Ukraine is laughing, weeping!  
And this portends the twins  
355 Have now been born into the world ;  
And the demented mother  
Screams that she'll name them both " Ivan "  
And shrieks with crazy laughter.  
Come, let us fly. . . .

---

360 They flew away,  
And as they flew they sang :

FIRST CROW :

Down the Dnipro, our Ivan  
Will sail to the Lyman,  
With his aunt !

SECOND CROW :

365 Our wild dog will migrate  
To feed upon snakes  
In my path!

THIRD CROW :

Ven I seize and swoop, I  
To 'Ades vill fly  
370 Like a dart!

### III

#### THREE MINSTRELS

One was blind, another lame,  
One a hunchbacked cripple,  
To Subotiv they came to sing  
Of Bohdan to the people.

FIRST MINSTREL :

375 Well, as folk say, those crows were quick  
To find a cosy roost!  
As though the Muscovites put up  
That perch just for their use.

SECOND MINSTREL :

And who else for, then? Surely now  
380 A man will not be put  
To count the stars there?

FIRST MINSTREL :

You don't say!  
Or maybe there they'll put  
A little Muscovite or German;  
385 Germans or Muscovites, I swear,  
Will find some pickings even there.

THIRD MINSTREL :

What nonsense are you jabbering?  
What kind of crows, now is it?  
What Muscovites? What roost d'you mean?  
390 The Lord above forbid it!  
Perhaps they'll want to force them to

Hatch Muscovites from eggs?  
For the tsar wants to capture all  
The world, so rumour says.

SECOND MINSTREL :

395 Maybe you're right, but why the devil  
Build them on the mountains?  
And such high ones, too, that you  
Can reach the very clouds when  
You climb up there?

THIRD MINSTREL :

400 This is why :  
There'll be a flood for sure.  
And then the lords will climb up high,  
And they will watch from there  
How all the peasant folk are drowned.

FIRST MINSTREL :

405 You folk may have a store  
Of wisdom—but you still know nothing!  
Here's the reason why  
They set up these 'monuments' :  
So that folk won't try  
410 To steal water from the river  
Or plough secretly  
The sands that stretch around the Tyasmyn.

SECOND MINSTREL :

What the devil now?  
You've no talent—so don't lie !  
415 Why don't we sit down  
Under this elm here for a while  
And rest? And in my pack  
I've still a bit of bread or two,  
So we can have a snack.  
420 Let's eat now, while we have the chance,  
The sun will be up soon.  
(They sat down.) And who, brothers, about  
Bohdan sings a tune?

THIRD MINSTREL :

I can sing right well of Jassy  
425 And the Yellow Waters,  
And Berestechko's little town.

SECOND MINSTREL :

Great service they'll have brought us  
Before this day has run its course :  
For by the Vault there's plenty  
430 Of folk, a proper market-day !  
And quite a lot of gentry !  
That's where the takings are for us !  
Well, let us sing together  
For practice !

FIRST MINSTREL :

435 Get along with you !  
Let's lie down. Far better  
To get some sleep ! The day is long,  
There'll still be time to sing.

THIRD MINSTREL :

And so say I. Let's say our prayers,  
440 Then sleep—yes, sleep's the thing.

---

They fell asleep beneath the elm-tree.  
The sun sleeps on, the birds are still,  
But near the Vault they're up and busy,  
Already digging with a will.

445 Already they've dug one day, two,  
And now the third—at last  
After great effort there's the wall,  
They take a little rest,  
And station sentries all around.  
450 The Sergeant prays and begs  
Not to let anybody near.  
Officially he sends  
Report to Chyhyryn. The boss  
Arrived with bloated face ;  
455 He looked : " T'e arches must be broken."  
He observed, " T'e case  
Vill then be settled." They broke in,  
And they were terrified :  
Skeletons lay there in the Vault,  
460 It seemed as if they smiled  
To look upon the shining sun.



There Bohdan's treasure lay :  
 A potsherd and a rotten trough,  
 And skeletons in chains !  
 465 Had they been regulation ones,  
 They might be useful yet !  
 They laughed. . . . The Sergeant in his rage  
 Nearly went off his head :  
 Nothing to take—and after he  
 470 Had worked so hard, and set  
 Himself a-dither day and night—  
 And now he only looked  
 A fool ! If only he could get  
 His hands on him, he'd put  
 475 That Bohdan straight into the army ;  
 Then he'd know how, the pest,  
 To fool the Government ! He shouts  
 And runs like one possessed ;  
 He sloshes Yaremenko's\* face,  
 480 And in the choicest Russian  
 He curses everyone, swoops on  
 The minstrels in a passion.  
 " Vat you vant 'ere, good for not'ings ? "  
 " Well, please, Sir, we can  
 485 Sing a ballad, Sir, of Bohdan ! "  
 " *I'll* give you Bogdan !  
 Rogues and vagabonds, and you  
 Made on an accursed  
 Rogue, just like yourselves, a song ! "  
 490 " Please you, Sir, we learned it ! "  
 " *I* vill learn you ! Give it t'em ! "  
 They seized and gave—no mercy !  
 And they steamed them in the Muscovites'  
 Own bathhouse-Cooler !  
 495 Thus the ballads about Bohdan  
 Served the singers truly !  
 Thus in Subotiv Moscow dug  
 The small vault as her prize ;  
 Still she has not yet discovered  
 500 Where the Great Vault lies.

[1845  
 Myrhorod.]

\* Cossack Yaremenko's barn is on the site where Bohdan's palace used to stand. (Shevchenko's note.)

# НАЙМИЧКА

## THE SERVANT-GIRL

### PROLOGUE

Early morning, on a Sunday,  
All the field with mist was flooded,  
In the mist, upon a gravemound,  
Like a poplar leaning forward,  
5 A young woman stood. She pressed  
Something close against her breast,  
She was talking with the mist.  
“O mist, I implore you,  
My patched, shabby fortune!  
10 Why not conceal me, then,  
Here in the cornfield?  
Choke me and stifle me,  
Under the earth drive me?  
Snatch me from evil fate,  
15 Shorten my life for me?  
Not that!—but hide me, mist,  
Here in the plain,  
That none see or know  
My misfortune, my shame!  
20 I am not alone, I have  
Father and mother . . .  
And I have too,—dear mist,  
Mist, dearest brother . . .  
My child! My small son!  
25 Unbaptized still!  
I shall not christen you,  
Boding you ill;  
Strangers will christen you,—  
I’ll not know which  
30 Name they call you. . . . My child!  
I was once rich . . .  
Curse me not! I shall pray  
Heaven itself,  
Weep down and send to you  
35 Fortune and health!”

Sobbing, she went across the field,  
Hiding in the mist,  
And through her tears she quietly sang  
The song of that distressed  
40 Widow, who in the Danube's flood  
Laid her sons to rest :

“ There a grave lies in the plain,  
To this spot a widow came,  
Here she came and wandered round,  
45 Seeking for a poison-flower,  
Could not find this poison-herb,  
Then twin sons she brought to birth,  
Wrapped them in a silken shawl,  
Brought them to the Danube's shore :  
50 ‘ Gentle, gentle Danube,  
Make my children happy !  
You, bright sand, all golden,  
Feed my little children,  
Feed them, wrap them over,  
55 Be for them a cover ! ’ ”

## I

There lived an old couple,  
Long year after year, in their little holding,  
At the pondside, by a wood,  
Like two children the pair were  
60 Always together.  
They'd pastured sheep together in childhood,  
Later married and settled,  
They purchased some cattle,  
Bought their holding, a mill with a pond,  
65 Made an orchard in the wood  
With many hives of bees,—  
They had all for their needs.  
But no children came ; and now Death  
Drew close to them with shouldered scythe.  
70 Who would be a child to them?  
Who brighten and console  
Their old age? Mourn and bury them?  
And who pray for their souls?  
Who'd manage all their property,

75 As is fit and right,  
Remembering them gratefully,  
As would their own child?  
Hard it is to rear your children  
Among roofless walls,  
80 But it is worse, far worse, to grow  
Old in splendid halls,  
To grow old and die alone,  
Leave all one has gained  
To strangers and their children to  
85 Amuse themselves and waste.

## II

And then it happened the old couple  
Were sitting on the bench one Sunday,  
Fine and smart in shirts of white ;  
High above, the sun shone bright,  
90 Not the smallest cloud—all quiet  
And tranquil as in heaven,  
Like a beast in a dark wood,  
Grief in their hearts was hidden.

In such a heaven, what is it  
95 Makes the old couple mourn?  
Has some long-ago misfortune  
Woken in their home?  
Is it a grief, crushed yesterday,  
That once again is stirring?  
100 Or just this moment taken root,  
And set this heaven burning?

I do not know why the old pair  
Were sorrowing so. Perhaps, already,  
To go to God they would prepare,  
105 And for that long road, who'd be there  
To harness up their horses for them?

—"Who'll bury us, Nastya, when we go  
Out of this world?"

"Well, I don't know!"  
110 I have thought it over well,  
Till it made me grieve ;  
We have grown old all alone . . .

And who is there to leave  
Our goods to? ”

115                   “ Hush a moment! There!  
D’you hear? There’s something weeping,  
Like a child, outside the gate!  
Quickly! Do you see?  
I’ve felt that something’s going to happen! ”

120 Together, up they jump,  
Off to the gate! They reach it and  
Stop short, struck quite dumb :  
Just outside the very stile  
A swaddled baby lay,  
125 Well-wrapped-round, but not too tightly,  
With a new mantle swathed ;  
For its mother swaddled it,  
Wrapped it (it was summer),  
In her last remaining mantle!  
130 They stand there, our old couple,  
They look, they pray. Then, poor mite,  
As if it would implore them,  
The baby raised its little hands,  
Stretching out towards them  
135 Its tiny fingers. . . . It grew quiet,  
As if it would not weep,  
Only whimpered softly.

  “ Well,  
Nastya? I said so! See!  
140 It is fortune! It is fate!  
We’ll be alone no more!  
Well, pick him up and swaddle him! . . .  
Look at him! Bless his soul!  
Take him indoors. To Horodyshche  
145 I shall ride. We need  
God-parents for him.”

  Strange the way  
Things chance with us, indeed.  
One man curses his own son,  
150 Drives him from the house ;  
Another earns a candle with  
The sweat of weary brows,  
Sets it up before the ikons,

Sobs and humbly pleads :  
155 He has no children. . . . Strange the way  
Things chance with us, indeed.

### III

From joy they asked no less than six  
God-parents for the baby,  
They christened him that evening ; Marko  
160 Was the name they gave him.  
Marko grew. And our old couple  
Couldn't find a thing  
Good enough, forever fussing,  
Coddling, pampering him.  
165 A year went by. Our Marko grew,  
And for his sake the milch-cow  
Was steeped in luxury. And then  
There arrived a dark-browed  
Young woman at the house one day,  
170 She was young and pretty,  
And to that blessed home she came  
To seek a maid's position.

" Well, then, " he says, " Let's have her, Nastya ! "  
" Yes, Trokhym, let's take her,  
175 For we are old and ailing, too,  
And then there is the baby,  
He's grown a lot already, true,  
But all the same, he needs  
Quite a lot of looking after."  
180 " Yes, he does, indeed !  
For I've already lived, thank God,  
My span of years away,  
I'm no longer young. Now lass,  
What are you asking, say?  
185 Yearly, or how? "

" Whatever *you* give. . . . "  
" No! You have to know,  
My girl, you have to count the cash,  
The cash you've earned ; for so  
190 It's said : Who doesn't count his money,  
Doesn't own much, either.  
Let's put it this way, lass : we don't  
Know you, nor you us, neither ;

You'll live in with us, see what sort  
195 Of work it is, while we  
See how you manage. Then we'll talk  
Of wages. How'd that be  
For you, my girl? ”  
“ That suits me, Sir ! ”  
200 “ Then let's go in, and see ! ”

They settled on a wage for her.  
The girl was happy, gay,  
As if she'd married a fine lord,  
Or purchased broad estates.  
205 In the house and in the farmyard,  
By the cattle-byre,  
Dawn and evening she was busy ;  
And as for that dear child,  
She would tend him like a mother !  
210 Common-days alike  
And Sundays, washed his curly hair,  
And dressed him up in white  
Blouses every single day ;  
Played with him, sang him rhymes,  
215 Made him little carts, and feast-days  
Nursed him all the time.  
The old couple were astonished,  
Thanking God, they prayed.  
But every single night, poor lass,  
220 The watchful servant-maid  
Cursed her fate and shed salt tears  
Weeping bitterly ;  
And there was none to hear her weep,  
None to know or see,  
225 Only little Marko sees it,  
And *he* cannot know  
Why the servant-girl with bitter  
Tear-drops bathes him so.  
Marko does not know why she  
230 Kisses him so dearly,  
Hardly stops to eat or drink—  
Only cares to feed him.  
Marko knows not how at night,  
Often, in his cradle  
235 He rouses, stirs the slightest bit—  
At once she's up and wakeful,

Tucks him in and blesses him,  
Rocks him quietly,  
For from the other room she hears  
240 How the child is breathing.  
In the morning, Marko holds  
His little arms towards Hanna,  
Hails the watchful servant-girl  
With the name of "Mama",  
245 Marko does not know; he grows,  
Growing towards manhood.

#### IV

Many seasons passed away,  
There flowed past many waters,  
And to the homestead sorrow came,  
250 And many tears were falling.  
They laid old Nastya to her rest,  
And hardly could revive again  
Old Trokhym. Sorrow passed, and went  
Away again, and once more slept.  
255 Back to the homestead, happiness  
Out from behind the dark grove crept,  
At home with the old man to rest.

Marko was a carter now,  
And in the autumn evenings, too,  
260 He at home would never tarry,—  
It was time for him to marry.  
"But who is there?" the old man thought,  
And he asked advice  
Of the servant. To an emperor's  
265 Daughter she'd have liked  
To send matchmakers: "You must get  
Marko himself, and ask him."  
"Right, my girl! We'll ask the boy,  
Then have the wedding-party."  
270 They asked him, talked the matter over,  
Marko at once went out  
For matchmakers. They soon returned  
Bearing betrothal towels,  
Blessed bread exchanged. And *she* was a



- 275 Young lady, fine arrayed in  
 Furs, and then so pretty, too,  
 This bride, that such a maiden  
 Would be a fit match for a Hetman.  
 Yes, they'd found a treasure!
- 280 "Thank you, friends," the old man said.  
 "Now, we have to settle  
 Everything, so that you can know,  
 When and where shall we  
 Have the wedding and the feast.
- 285 And then again, who'll be  
 Mother for us? My Nastya did not  
 Live to see this day! . . ."  
 His tears welled up. But in the doorway  
 Stood the servant-maid,
- 290 She clenched her hands against the jamb,  
 And swooned. And not another  
 Sound was heard—only the servant  
 Whispered: "Mother. . . . Mother!"

## V

- A week went by, and the young women  
 295 Knead the bridal loaf  
 At the homestead. The old father,  
 Summoning his strength,  
 Dances, too, with the young women,  
 Sweeps the courtyard clean,
- 300 And all who pass or journey by  
 He invites within.  
 Offering them honey-brandy,  
 Invites them for the wedding,  
 Scurrying around, although
- 305 His legs will hardly bear him.  
 In the house and out, is noise,  
 Laughter all about,  
 From the store, last barrel-loads  
 Of flour they're dragging out.
- 310 All around is bustle,—baking,  
 Boiling, washing, cleaning . . .  
 All done by strangers. Where's the maid?  
 On pilgrimage to Kyiv

Hanna has gone. The old man pleaded,  
315 Marko was weeping quite,  
Begging her to act as mother.  
“ No, Marko ! It’s not right  
For me to take your mother’s place :  
You are wealthy folk,  
320 And I’m a servant-girl ; that way  
You’d be a laughing stock.  
May God bless and help you both !  
I shall go to pray  
To all the holy saints at Kyiv,  
325 Then I’ll return again  
To your home, if you’ll have me back.  
As long as I have strength  
I shall work for you.”  
Sincerely,  
330 From her heart, she blessed  
Her Marko, and, all bathed in tears,  
Went beyond the stile.

The wedding celebrations started.  
There was work, meanwhile,  
335 For musicians and for shoes.  
Tables and benches ran  
With brandy. But the servant trudged,  
To Kyiv hurried on.  
To Kyiv came, but did not rest,  
340 Found a place to stay,  
Hired herself out to carry water,  
For no cash remained  
To have St. Barbara’s Litany sung.  
She carried back and forth,  
345 Earned some eight fifty-copeck pieces,  
And for Marko bought  
A blessed cap in the catacombs  
Of the great St. John,  
That Marko ever should be free  
350 From headache, henceforth on.  
And then a St. Barbara ring  
For the bride she earned,  
Paid her respects to all the saints,  
Then homeward she returned.  
355 She returned home. Kateryna

And Marko ran and met her  
 Outside the gate, led her within  
 And at the table set her ;  
 Spread before her food and drink,  
 360 Asked her countless questions  
 Of Kyiv, while Kateryna spread  
 A bed for her to rest on.  
 “ Why so dearly do they love me?  
 Why respect me so?  
 365 God of goodness and of mercy,  
 Do they, maybe, know?  
 Have they guessed the secret, maybe? . . .  
 No, they have not guessed.  
 It’s because they’re good. . . .”  
 370 And bitter  
 Tears the servant shed.

## VI

Thrice the river banks were frozen,  
 Thrice they thawed again,—  
 Three times Katrya saw the servant  
 375 Off upon her way  
 To Kyiv, as she would her mother.  
 And for the fourth time walked  
 With her right to the field, the mound,  
 Praying to the Lord  
 380 That she’d come quickly home again,  
 For without her, the home  
 Was somehow sad, as though the mother  
 Were away from home.

After Our Lady’s feast, one Sunday,  
 385 After Assumption Day, old Trokhym  
 Was sitting in a fine white shirt  
 And straw hat, on the bench. Before him  
 With the dog his grandson played,  
 And his grand-daughter, all dressed up  
 390 In mother’s bodice, played she’d come  
 To visit grandpa. The old man gave  
 A laugh, then solemnly he greeted  
 His grandchild, like a grown-up lady.  
 “ But what’s become, say, of your pasty?

395 They've robbed you in the woods, maybe?  
 Or did you just forget to take it?  
 Or, maybe, you've not yet baked it?  
 What a fine mother! Shame, indeed!"  
 But look! Into the courtyard came  
 400 The maid. The old man ran to meet  
 His Hanna, and the children too.  
 "Is Marko on the road?"  
 Hanna asked the old man. "Yes,  
 Still out on the road."  
 405 "And I could hardly hobble back,  
 Come back to your home,  
 I did not wish in foreign parts  
 To perish all alone!  
 If I could only wait for Marko . . .  
 410 I feel so weary, somehow . . ."  
 And for the grandchildren, she drew  
 Out presents from her bundle:  
 Little crosses and medallions,  
 And for Yarynochka  
 415 A string of corals, and red foil  
 Made into a holy picture;  
 For Karpo, she'd a nightingale,  
 And a pair of horses;  
 And for Kateryna, now  
 420 Already for the fourth time,  
 A St. Barbara ring; and three  
 Tapers of hallowed wax  
 For old grandpa; but for Marko  
 And herself, she lacked  
 425 A present: she could not buy more,  
 There was no money left,  
 She had grown too ill to earn.  
 "But look! I've still got left  
 Half a doughnut!"  
 430 And to the children  
 Gave a bite to each.

## VII

She went within. And Kateryna  
 Washed and bathed her feet,  
 Sat her down to take a meal.

- 435 She could not drink or eat,  
 Poor old Hanna.  
   "Kateryna,  
   When will Sunday be?"  
   "The day after tomorrow." "Then
- 440 We must have them sing  
 St. Nicholas's Litany,  
 And make an offering,  
 For Marko's somehow been delayed,  
 Maybe out on the road
- 445 He was taken ill, may God  
 Protect him!" And tears flowed  
 From her old and weary eyes.  
 Hardly could she stand,  
 Rise from table.
- 450                                   "Kateryna,  
 I no longer am  
 What I was, too weak to stand,  
 Useless I have grown.  
 Katrya, it's hard to die within
- 455 A stranger's cosy home!"
- The poor old soul grew weak and ill,  
 Already they have sent  
 To bring Communion to her and  
 The Last Sacrament,—
- 460 It did not help! Old Trokhym roams  
 The yard with death-like face;  
 Kateryna from poor Hanna  
 Cannot shift her gaze,—  
 Kateryna at her side
- 465 Days and nights would spend,  
 While in the night, owls on the barn  
 Boded no good end.  
 Every day and every hour  
 The invalid entreats her,
- 470 With her voice the merest whisper,  
 "Daughter Kateryna,  
 Hasn't Marko come back yet?  
 Ah, if I knew for sure  
 That I could last until I see him,
- 475 Then I could endure!"

## VIII

Marko journeys with the carters,  
 Singing as he's walking,  
 Does not hurry to the homestead,  
 Stops to graze his oxen.  
 480 Marko brings for Kateryna  
 Fabrics, costly, rich ;  
 For his father, there's a girdle  
 Woven from red silk ;  
 For the servant, gold brocade  
 485 To make herself a bonnet,  
 And a kerchief of good crimson  
 With white fringe upon it ;  
 And for the children, little shoes,  
 Figs and grapes ; and then  
 490 From Constantinople, red  
 Wine for all of them,  
 Three good caskfuls in the barrel,  
 Caviar from the Don,—  
 He brings it all, but does not know  
 495 What's happening at home.

Marko journeys, does not worry,  
 He arrives, thank God !  
 Pushes the gate open wide,  
 Says a prayer to God.  
 500 " Do you hear him, Kateryna ?  
 Run and welcome him !  
 He is here at last ! Run quicker,  
 Quickly bring him in !  
 Thanks be to Thee, holy Saviour !  
 505 He is here at last ! "  
 And softly she repeats " Our Father ",  
 As if from a trance.

The old man unyokes the oxen,  
 Stows the brightly trimmed  
 510 Yoke-stays, and Katrusya turns  
 To Marko, watching him.  
 " But where is Hanna, Kateryna ?  
 I've not cared a bit !  
 She's not dead, surely ? "

515   “ No, not dead,  
       But she's very sick.  
       Let's go into the smaller room,  
       Father will unharness  
       The oxen ; Marko, it's for you  
 520 She's waiting, always asking.”

      Marko went to the smaller room,  
       But on the threshold stopped . . .  
       For he was frightened. Hanna whispered :  
       “ Glory be to God !  
 525 Come over here, don't be afraid ! . . .  
       Katrya, please go away !  
       There's something that I have to ask him,  
       Something I must say.”

      Kateryna left the room,  
 530 Marko by the head  
       Of the old servant-maid bent down.  
       “ Marko, look ! ” she said.  
       “ Look upon me ! Do you see  
       How wasted I've become ?  
 535 I'm not Hanna, nor a servant,  
       I . . . ”

                              And she grew dumb.  
       Marko wept and wondered deeply.  
       Once more her eyes were open,  
 540 She gazed at him with all her strength,—  
       And tears started flowing.  
       “ Forgive me. All my life here in  
       A stranger's home I've suffered . . .  
       Forgive me, then, my little son !  
 545 I . . . I am your mother ! ”  
       And she grew silent. . . .

  Marko swooned,  
       The ground shook with a tremor.  
       His sense returned . . . he looked at her—  
 550 His mother slept forever.

[13.xi.1845  
 Pereyaslav.]—  
 [1860]

THE CAUCASUS  
TO YAKIV DE BALMEN

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears,  
that I might weep day and night for the slain . . .  
Jeremiah ix. 1.

Mountains beyond mountains, crags in stormclouds cloaked,  
Wild heights sown with sorrow, soil that blood has soaked.

From the dawn of time, Prometheus  
Hangs, the eagle's victim ;  
5 All God's days, it pecks his ribs,  
Tears the heart within him.  
Tears, but cannot drink away  
The blood that throbs with life,  
Still it lives and lives again,  
10 And still once more he smiles.  
For our soul shall never perish,  
Freedom knows no dying,  
And the Glutton cannot harvest  
Fields where seas are lying ;  
15 Cannot bind the living spirit,  
Nor the living word,  
Cannot smirch the sacred glory  
Of almighty God.

Not for us to stand against Thee,  
20 Not for us to judge Thy deed :  
For us there is but weeping, weeping,  
For us our daily bread to knead  
Well-mixed with blood and sweat and tears ;  
The hangman tortures, mocks and jeers,  
25 Our drunken truth sleeps on—as dead !

When will she wake once more from slumber?  
When, worn out with strife,  
Lord, wilt Thou lie down to rest  
And grant us people life?  
30 Truly in Thy might, Thy living



Spirit we believe ;  
Liberty and right shall triumph,  
And, O Lord, to Thee  
Every tongue on earth shall pray  
35 Through the length of days.  
Meanwhile, rivers rise in flood,  
Swollen streams of blood.

Mountains beyond mountains, crags in stormclouds cloaked,  
Wild heights sown with sorrow, soil that blood has soaked.

40 " And there, Our Majesty surprised  
(Naked and starving though it be),  
A poor, but natural liberty.  
The hunt is on! . . ." Since then, the ground  
Is strewn with conscripts' scattered bones.  
45 And tears? And blood? Enough to drown  
All emperors with all their sons  
And grandsons eager for the throne  
In widows' tears. . . . And maidens' tears  
Shed secretly the whole night long?  
50 What of the fiery tears of mothers?  
The blood-stained tears of aged fathers?  
Not rivers now—a sea, full-flood,  
A sea of fire. . . . Glory! Glory!  
Glory to wolf-hounds, trappers, hunters,  
55 And to the tsars, our " little fathers ",  
                    Glory!  
And glory to you, dark-blue mountains,  
Frost and snow protect you ;  
And to you, great-hearted heroes,  
60 God does not forget you.  
Struggle on—and be triumphant!  
God Himself will aid you ;  
At your side fight truth and glory,  
Right and holy freedom.

65 " Bannock and croft are all your own ;  
They were not alms, were not a gift,—  
No one will seize them for his own,  
Clap you in chains and drag you off.  
In our domain . . . We're civilized,  
70 We read the words of Holy Writ,  
And from the dungeon's lowest pit

Up to the glory of the throne,  
 We're all in gold—and naked too.  
 We'll show you culture! You'll be taught  
 75 The price of bread, the price of salt . . .  
 We're Christians. We have shrines and learning,  
 And all that's good. God likes us too!  
 Your croft alone still spoils our view;  
 Why does it stand upon your land  
 80 Without our leave? Why can we not  
 Throw you your bannocks as to dogs?  
 Why don't you, when all's said and done,  
 Pay excise duty on the sun?  
 That's all we ask! For we're not heathens,  
 85 We're genuine, professing Christians.  
 We're satisfied with little,—so  
 If only you'd be friendly too,  
 There'd be so much to show to you.  
 A good slice of the world is ours;  
 90 Siberia, think!—too vast to cross!  
 Jails? People? Counting takes too long!  
 From the Moldavian to the Finn  
 Silence is held in every tongue . . .  
 All quite content . . . In our domain  
 95 The Bible is made plain to us,  
 The holy monks explain it thus:—  
 A king, who used to pasture swine,  
 Murdered a friend, and stole his wife,  
 —And thus he won eternal life!  
 100 Just see who's in *our* Paradise!  
 You're unenlightened, you don't know  
 The truths the Holy Cross can show!  
 So learn our rule! Fleece, fleece and give;  
 And when you've given—  
 105 Straight off to heaven,  
 And take the family if you like!  
 And as for us! What don't we know?  
 There's stars to count and corn to sow,  
 We curse the French! And we can sell  
 110 (They make fine stakes at cards as well),  
 People—not negroes, our own kind,  
 Just simple Christians, we don't mind,  
 For we're not Dagoes! God forbid  
 That we should deal in stolen goods  
 115 As Jew-boys do. We live 'by law'! . . ."

By the apostolic law?  
Then you love your brethren?  
Hypocrites, with vipers' tongues,  
Rogues accursed by heaven!  
120 Yes, you love your brother's skin,  
Never mind his soul!  
Fleece him 'by law' when you need money :  
A daughter's fine fur stole,  
Or a dowry for your bastard,  
125 Slippers for your wife,  
And expenses you don't mention  
In your family life!

Why, then wast Thou crucified,  
Christ, Thou Son of God?  
130 Was it just for us good people?  
For the word of truth?  
So that we would mock Thee, maybe?  
That's the way it was!

Shrines and chapels, candelabra,  
135 Ikons, clouds of incense,  
Deep prostrations, never tiring,  
Honouring Thine Image ;  
—Grant them theft and war and murder,  
So that they may kill a brother,  
140 Behold, they offer gifts to Thee !  
Loot from a fire, fine tapestry ! . . .

“ We are the enlightened ! Now  
We bring the radiant sun,  
Reveal the blessed light of truth  
145 To sightless little ones.  
Come to us, and all you ought  
To know will be made plain :  
Prison building will be taught,  
How to forge your chains,  
150 How to wear them, how the knout  
Is plaited—we'll explain  
All our science. Only yield  
Your dark-blue mountains, please—  
They alone defy us now,  
155 We hold the plains and seas ! ”

And they drove you there, Yakiv, to die as a stranger,  
My friend, my one friend! Not for our Ukraina,  
But for her hangman they made you shed blood,  
—Not black blood, but good; and you drank your reward  
160 From a Muscovite chalice of Muscovite poison.  
My friend, my dear friend, in my thoughts unforgotten!  
Come, living soul, come to dwell in Ukraine;  
Fly across banks with the Cossacks, stand guard  
By the robbed mounds of heroes, and wait in the plain,  
165 Sharing the tears that the Cossacks are weeping,  
Until I escape from this slavery and pain.

Meanwhile, I have seeds to scatter,  
All my aching grief,  
170 All my thoughts; God grant they blossom,  
Speaking in the wind.  
Peaceful winds from Ukraina,  
Bearing dew, will carry  
All my thoughts to you, dear brother,  
175 Greeting them with sorrow,  
You will read them to the end,  
Recalling quietly,  
The heroes' graves, the plains, the hills,  
The land you loved—and me.

18.xi.1845  
Pereyaslav.

I МЕРТВИМ, I ЖИВИМ . . .

TO MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN, IN UKRAINE AND NOT IN UKRAINE,  
LIVING, DEAD AND AS YET UNBORN

MY FRIENDLY EPISTLE

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

Dusk is falling, dawn is breaking,  
And God's day is ending,  
Once again a weary people  
And all things are resting.  
5 Only I, like one accursed,  
Night and day stand weeping  
At the many-peopled cross-roads,  
And yet no one sees me.  
No one sees me, no one knows,  
10 Deaf, they do not hearken,  
They are trading with their fetters,  
Using truth to bargain,  
And they all neglect the Lord,—  
In heavy yokes they harness  
15 People; thus they plough disaster,  
And they sow disaster . . .  
But what shoots spring up? You'll see  
What the harvest yields them!  
Shake your wits awake, you brutes,  
20 You demented children!  
Look upon your native country,  
On this peaceful eden;  
Love with overflowing heart  
This expanse of ruin!  
25 Break your chains, and live as brothers!  
Do not try to seek,  
Do not ask in foreign lands  
For what can never be  
Even in heaven, let alone  
30 In a foreign region . . .  
In one's own house,—one's own truth,  
One's own might and freedom.

There is no other Ukraina,  
No second Dnipro in the world,  
35 Yet you strike out for foreign regions,  
To seek, indeed, the blessed good,  
The holy good, and freedom, freedom,  
Fraternal brotherhood. . . . You found  
And carried from that foreign region,  
40 And to Ukraine brought, homeward-bound,  
The mighty power of mighty words,  
And nothing more than that. . . . You scream, too,  
That God, creating you, did not mean you  
To worship untruth, then, once more,  
45 You bow down as you bowed before,  
And once again the very skin you  
Tear from your sightless, peasant brothers,  
Then, to regard the sun of truth  
In places not unknown, you shove off  
50 To German lands. If only you'd  
Take all your miserable possessions,  
The goods your ancestors have stolen,  
Then with its holy heights, the Dnipro  
Would remain bereft, an orphan.

55 Ah, if it could be that you would not return,  
That you'd give up the ghost in the place you were reared,  
The children would weep not, nor mother's tears burn,  
And God would not hear your blaspheming and sneers,  
The sun pour no warmth out upon the foul dunghill,  
60 Over a land that is free, broad and true,  
Then folk would not realize what kind of eagles  
You are, and would not shake their heads over you.

Find your wits! Be human beings,  
For evil is impending,  
65 Very soon the shackled people  
Will their chains be rending;  
Judgment will come, and then shall speak  
The mountains and the Dnipro,  
And in a hundred rivers, blood  
70 Will flow to the blue ocean,  
Your children's blood . . . and there will be  
No one to help you . . . Brother  
Will by his brother be renounced,  
The child by its own mother.

- 75 And like a cloud, dark smoke will cover  
The bright sun before you,  
For endless ages your own sons  
Will curse you and abhor you.  
Wash your faces! God's fair image
- 80 Do not foul with filth!  
Do not deceive your children that  
They live upon this earth  
Simply that they should rule as lords—  
For an unlearned eye
- 85 Will deeply search their very souls,  
Deeply, thoroughly . . .  
For whose skin you're wearing, helpless  
Mites will realize,  
They will judge you,—and the unlearned
- 90 Will deceive the wise.
- 

Had you but learned the way you ought,  
Then wisdom also would be yours ;  
But thus to heaven you would climb :  
“ We are not we, I am not I !  
95 I have seen all, all things I know :  
There is no hell, there is no heaven,  
Not even God, but only I and  
The stocky German, clever-clever,  
And no one else beside. . . . ” “ Good, brother !  
100 But who, then, are you ? ”  
“ *We* don't know—  
Let the German speak ! ”

That's the way you learn in your  
Foreign land, indeed !  
105 The German would say : “ You are Mongols ”.  
“ Mongols, that is plain ! ”  
Yes, the naked grandchildren  
Of golden Tamburlaine !  
The German would say : “ You are Slavs ”.  
110 “ Slavs, yes, Slavs indeed ! ”  
Of great and glorious ancestors  
The unworthy seed !  
And so you read Kollar, too,  
With all your might and main,  
115 Safarik as well, and Hanka,

Full-tilt you push away  
Into the Slavophils, all tongues  
Of the Slavonic race  
You know full well, but of your own  
120 Nothing! "There'll come a day  
When we can parley in our own  
When the German teaches,  
And, what is more, our history  
Explains to us and preaches,  
125 Then we will set about it all!"

You've made a good beginning,  
Following the German precepts  
You have started speaking  
So that the German cannot grasp  
130 The sense, the mighty teacher,  
Not to mention simple people.  
And uproar! And the screeching:  
"Harmony and power too,  
Nothing less than music!  
135 As for history! Of a free  
Nation 'tis the epic . . .  
Can't compare with those poor Romans!  
Their Bruti—good-for-nothings!  
But oh, *our* Cocleses and Bruti—  
140 Glorious, unforgotten!  
Freedom herself grew up with us,  
And in the Dnipro bathed,  
She had mountains for her pillow,  
And for her quilt—the plains!"  
145 It was in blood she bathed herself,  
She took her sleep on piles  
Of the corpses of free Cossacks,  
Corpses all despoiled.

Only look well, only read  
150 That glory through once more,  
From the first word to the last,  
Read; do not ignore  
Even the least apostrophe,  
Not one comma even,  
155 Search out the meaning of it all,  
Then ask yourself the question:  
"Who are we? Whose sons? Of what sires?"



By whom and why enchained? ”  
And then, indeed, you'll see for what  
160 Are your Bruti famed :

Toadies, slaves, the filth of Moscow,  
Warsaw's garbage—are your lords,  
Illustrious hetmans! Why so proud  
And swaggering, then do you boast, you  
165 Sons of Ukraine and her misfortune?  
That well you know to wear the yoke,  
More than your fathers did of yore?  
They are flaying you,—cease your boasts—  
From *them*, at times, the fat they'd thaw.

170 You boast, perhaps, the Brotherhood  
Defended the faith of old?  
Because they boiled their dumplings in  
Sinope, Trebizond?  
It is true, they ate their fill,  
175 But now your stomach's dainty,  
And in the Sich, the clever German  
Plants his beds of 'taties ;  
And you buy, and with good relish  
Eat what he has grown,  
180 And you praise the Zaporozhya.  
But whose blood was it flowed  
Into that soil and soaked it through  
So that potatoes flourish?  
While it's good for kitchen-gardens  
185 You're the last to worry!  
And you boast because we once  
Brought Poland to destruction . . .  
It is true, yes, Poland fell,  
But in her fall she crushed you.  
190 Thus, then, your fathers spilled their blood  
For Moscow and for Warsaw,  
And to you, their sons, they have  
Bequeathed their chains, their glory.

---

Ukraina struggled on,  
195 Fighting to the limit :  
She is crucified by those  
Worse-than-Poles, her children.

In place of beer, they draw the righteous  
 Blood from out her sides,  
 200 Wishing, so they say, to enlighten  
 The maternal eyes  
 With contemporary lights,  
 To lead her as the times  
 Demand it, in the Germans' wake  
 205 (She crippled, speechless, blind).  
 Good, so be it! Lead, explain!  
 Let the poor old mother  
 Learn how children such as these  
 New ones she must care for.  
 210 Show her, then, and do not haggle  
 Your instruction's price.  
 A mother's good reward will come :  
 From your greedy eyes  
 The scales will fall away, and you  
 215 Will then behold the glory,  
 The living glory of your grandsires,  
 And fathers skilled in knavery.  
 Do not fool yourselves, my brothers,  
 Study, read and learn  
 220 Thoroughly the foreign things—  
 But do not shun your own :  
 For he who forgets his mother,  
 He by God is smitten,  
 His children shun him, in their homes  
 225 They will not permit him.  
 Strangers drive him from their doors ;  
 For this evil one  
 Nowhere in the boundless earth  
 Is a joyful home.  
 230 I weep salt tears when I recall  
 Those unforgotten actions  
 Of our forefathers, those grave deeds !  
 If I could but forget them,  
 Half my course of joyful years  
 235 I'd surrender gladly . . .  
 Such indeed, then, is our glory,  
 Ukraina's glory ! . . .  
 Thus too, you should read it through  
 That you'd do more than dream,  
 240 While slumbering, of injustices,  
 So that you would see

High gravemounds open up before  
Your eyes, that then you might  
Ask the martyrs when and why  
245 And who was crucified.  
Come, my brothers, and embrace  
Each your humblest brother,  
Make our mother smile again,  
Our poor, tear-stained mother !  
250 With hands that are firm and strong  
She will bless her children,  
Embrace her helpless little ones,  
And with free lips, she'll kiss them.  
And those bygone times will be  
255 Forgotten with their shame,  
And that glory will revive,  
The glory of Ukraine,  
And a clear light, not a twilight,  
Will shine forth anew . . .  
260 Brothers, then, embrace each other,  
I entreat and pray you !

14.xii.1845  
V'yunyshcha.

## ХОЛОДНИЙ ЯР

### THE COLD RAVINE

- To every man his own misfortune,  
Nor am I without one,  
Though it is not mine, but borrowed,  
Still it is—misfortune.
- 5 Why, one would say, recall events  
That happened so long past,  
Rouse them from God knows how far back?  
Good that they sleep at last! . . .  
Take, for example, that Ravine!
- 10 Already there remains  
Not even a narrow track to it,  
As though there never came  
Man's foot there—yet, if you but think,  
A good road ran between
- 15 The sacred Motryn monastery  
And that dread Ravine.  
Of old the Haydamaky there  
In that Ravine pitched camp,  
They primed their muskets for the fight
- 20 And made their lances sharp.  
In that Ravine assembled then  
(With suffering worn and tried)  
Father with son, brother with brother,  
In order, side by side,
- 25 To face the evil enemy,  
The accursed Pole.  
Where art thou, then, path to the deep  
Ravine once trodden well?  
Hast grown thyself with a dark grove?
- 30 Or have new hangmen come  
To plant thee over, so that now  
People cannot come  
For thy advice : what shall they do  
With masters just and good,
- 35 With wicked, evil cannibals,  
With new Poles? no, indeed,  
You cannot hide it! Zaliznyak

- Above the Ravine still hovers,  
Glances over towards Uman',  
40 Looking out for Gonta.  
Do not hide it, do not trample  
On the Holy Gospel,  
Do not hail ferocious Nero :  
" Righteous Apostle ! "
- 45 Do not try to find your glory  
In the Tsar's " crusade ",  
For you yourselves do not know what  
These Tsarlings perpetrate,  
But shout that " for the Fatherland "
- 50 You make this great oblation  
Of soul and skin ! Forsooth yours is  
Indeed a sheeplike nature !  
The fool offers his neck, not knowing  
What for it is wanted,
- 55 And, what is more, the idle loafer  
Scorns and sneers at Gonta !  
*" The Haydamaky were no warriors,  
Thieves they were, and robbers,  
A blot upon our history ! "*
- 60 Thou liest, people-starver :  
For freedom and the holy truth  
A robber does not rise up,  
Nor does he set free a people  
Who, dark, unlightened,
- 65 Are bound into your chains, does not  
Slay with his own hand  
An evil son, nor break his living  
Heart for his native land !  
It is you that are the robbers,
- 70 You, the insatiate !  
Hungry crows ! And by what righteous  
Holy law d'you trade  
In land, the equal gift to all,  
And traffic in misfortuned
- 75 Human beings ! Then beware,  
For evil will befall you,  
Grave evil. Fool your children, fool  
Your brother blind and sightless,  
Fool yourselves, fool strangers, too,
- 80 But fool not God Almighty !  
For, in the day of jubilation,

Vengeance unforeseen  
Will fall on you ; new fires will blow  
From out the Cold Ravine.

17.xii.1845  
V'yunyshcha.

МАЛЕНЬКІЙ МАР'ЯНІ

TO LITTLE MARYANA

- Grow up, grow up, my little bird,  
My poppy flower, open  
And blossom forth in loveliness  
Before your heart is broken,  
5 While folk still have not learned of the  
Quiet valley! . . . For if they  
Knew of it, for sport they'd parch it,  
Cast it then away.  
Neither, in the mantle of  
10 Their beauty, will young years  
Protect you, nor your hazel eyes,  
Bathed in sparkling tears,  
Nor a maiden's tranquil heart,  
To evil ways unwise,  
15 They will not protect, nor blindfold  
The insatiate eyes,—  
Evil ones will find you, rob you . . .  
And, poor child, will throw  
You down to Hell. . . . And you will curse  
20 The Lord, from out your woe.  
Do not blossom, my new flower,  
Flower still unopened!  
Wilt and wither quietly,  
Before your heart is broken!

20.xii.1845  
V'yunyshcha.

МИНАЮТЬ ДНІ, МИНАЮТЬ НОЧІ

Days are passing, nights are passing,  
Summer passes, yellowed leaves  
Rustle, sight dims, and thought, grown drowsy,  
Is slumbering, heart falls asleep ;  
5 All is asleep,—I do not know  
Whether I live, or fade, or go  
Tramping the world on empty paths,  
For now I neither weep nor laugh. . . .  
Where are you, my fortune? Where?  
10 There is none, is none !  
Lord, if *good* fate Thou wouldst grudge me,  
Grant an evil one !

Let me not fall asleep while walking,  
In my heart to die,  
15 Do not permit me, like a rotten  
Log on this earth to lie,  
Let me live, live in my heart,  
Love my fellow men,  
Or if not—let me set the world  
20 Alight with curses then.  
Terrible to fall into chains,  
Die in captivity,  
But worse, far worse, to sleep, to sleep,  
To sleep in liberty,  
25 Fall asleep for evermore,  
So that there remains  
Not a trace : He lived, or perished?  
It is all the same. . . .

Where are you, my fortune, where?  
30 There is none, is none !  
Lord, if *good* fate Thou would'st grudge me,  
Grant an evil one !

21.xii.1845  
V'yunyshcha.

## ЗАПОВІТ

### TESTAMENT

When I die, then make my grave  
High on an ancient mound,  
In my own beloved Ukraine,  
In steppeland without bound :  
5 Whence one may see wide-skirted wheatland,  
Dnipro's steep-cliffed shore,  
There whence one may hear the blustering  
River wildly roar.

Till from Ukraine to the blue sea  
10 It bears in fierce endeavour  
The blood of foemen—then I'll leave  
Wheatland and hills forever :  
Leave all behind, soar up until  
Before the throne of God  
15 I'll make my prayer. For till that hour  
I shall know naught of God.

Make my grave there—and arise,  
Sundering your chains,  
Bless your freedom with the blood  
20 Of foemen's evil veins !  
Then in that great family,  
A family new and free,  
Do not forget, with good intent  
Speak quietly of me.

25.xii.1845  
Pereyaslav.



## IN THE FORTRESS

Мені однаково, чи буду

### III

It does not touch me, not a whit,  
If I live in Ukraine or no,  
If men recall me, or forget,  
Lost as I am, in foreign snow,—  
5 Touches me not the slightest whit.  
Captive, to manhood I have grown  
In strangers' homes, and by my own  
Unmourned, a weeping captive still,  
I'll die; all that is mine, I will  
10 Bear off, let not a trace remain  
In our own glorious Ukraine,  
Our own land—yet a stranger's rather.  
And speaking with his son, no father  
Will recall, nor bid him: Pray,  
15 Pray, son! Of old, for our Ukraine,  
They tortured all his life away.  
It does not touch me, not a whit,  
Whether that son will pray, or no . . .  
But it does touch me deep if knaves,  
20 Evil rogues lull our Ukraine  
Asleep, and only in the flames  
Let her, all plundered, wake again . . .  
That touches me with deepest pain.

[May 1847  
St. Petersburg. In the Fortress.]

Ой три шляхи широкії

VI

[THE THREE PATHWAYS]

Once three pathways, broad and wide,  
Met upon the plain ;  
Into foreign parts, three brothers  
Set out from Ukraine.

- 5 And they left an aged mother,  
And one left a wife,  
One a sister, and the youngest  
Left his chosen bride.

- The old mother planted three  
10 Ash-trees in the meadow,  
And her son's wife planted there  
A poplar tall and slender,  
And the sister planted three  
Maples by the valley,  
15 And a guelder-rose was planted  
By the young fiancée.  
But the ash-trees did not root,  
And the poplar withered,  
The three maples withered up,  
20 The guelder-rose has wilted.  
The three brothers do not come . . .  
Their mother weeps them still,  
And the wife weeps with her children  
In a house grown chill.  
25 The sister weeps, she goes to seek  
Her brothers among strangers . . .  
And the young bride? In her coffin  
Quietly they laid her. . . .

- The three brothers do not come,  
30 They roam the world, forlorn,  
And three pathways, broad and wide  
Are overgrown with thorns.

[May 1847

St. Petersburg. In the Fortress.]

VIII

[EVENING]

Beside the house, the cherry's flowering,  
Above the trees the May bugs hum,  
The ploughmen from the furrows come,  
The girls all wander homeward, singing,  
5 And mothers wait the meal for them.

Beside the house, a family supper,  
Above, the evening star appears,  
The daughter serves the dishes here ;  
It's useless to advise her, mother,  
10 The nightingale won't let her hear.

Beside the house, the mother lulls  
The little children for the night,  
Then she, too, settles at their side.  
And all is still . . . Only the girls  
15 And nightingales disturb the quiet.

[May 1847

St. Petersburg. In the Fortress.]

Чи ми ще зійдемося знову?

XII

Shall we ever meet again,  
Or have we parted now forever,  
Carrying to the empty plains  
Love's word, truth's word, to the deserts?  
5 So be it! She was not our mother,  
Yet we had to pay her honour!  
Such is God's will. . . .

Obey it surely,

Be humble, seek the Lord in prayer  
Mindfully of one another ;  
10 Star, O Star!—and the bitter tears rain—  
Love her . . . in fierce times of evil,  
In the last dread hour of struggle,  
Fervently beseech God for her.

[30 May 1847

St. Petersburg. In the Fortress.]—

18.iii.1858

Moscow.

N. N. (Сонце заходить)

N.N.

- The sun sets, and dark the mountains become,  
The little bird hushes, the plain has grown dumb,  
The people rejoice that slumber is nearing,  
And I look : and I fly with my heart in my dreaming  
5 To a dark orchard in far Ukraina ;  
I fly there, I fly there, pondering deeply,  
And it seems that my heart is at rest, has grown tranquil.  
Dark shadows spread over plain, mountain and grove,  
A star twinkles out in the blue, high above :  
10 Star, O Star !—and the bitter tears rain—  
And hast thou, then, risen too, over Ukraine?  
Do the dark eyes search for thee yet  
In the blue heavens? Or did they forget?  
May they slumber forever if they have forgotten,  
15 Never to hear of my pitiful fortune.

[1847  
Fortress of Orsk.]

N. N. (Мені тринадцятий минало)

N.N.

- My thirteenth year was wearing on—  
Grazing the lambs, one day I was  
Beyond the village. The sun shone  
Perhaps? or was it without cause?  
5 Such joy, such joy, as at the throne  
Of God I felt . . .  
They'd called already for our food,  
But I, among the weeds, remained  
Alone, and prayed to God. Indeed,  
10 Why I, a small boy, wished to pray  
So eagerly, I do not know,

Nor how my happiness was caused.  
 Around, the village and the Lord's  
 Sky, the lambs, it seemed, rejoiced,  
 15 The sun shone warm—yet did not scorch.  
 Not long the sun shone fair and warm,  
 Not long my prayers I murmured,  
 The sun blazed fiery red above  
 And set this heaven burning.  
 20 As if aroused from sleep, I looked :  
 The village had grown dark,  
 Even God's azure sky above—  
 That too was cheerless, stark.  
 I turned my eyes towards the lambs—  
 25 These lambs were not mine ;  
 I looked yonder to the houses—  
 No home there I'd find.  
 God did not give me anything !  
 And tears started flowing . . .  
 30 Bitter tears. . . . But a young girl,  
 Over by the roadside,  
 Only a few steps away,  
 Was plucking hemp, and she  
 Heard my sobs, came to my side  
 35 And spoke kind words to me,  
 Gently wiped away my tears,  
 And kissed me tenderly.

It seemed once more the sun shone bright,  
 As if the whole wide world were mine :  
 40 The fields, the spinneys, and the orchards . . .  
 And laughing, we began to drive  
 Those lambs, that were not ours, to water.

Idle dreams, indeed ! But even  
 Now, when I recall, my heart  
 45 Aches, weeps : why God let me not pass  
 My little span in that dear heaven ?  
 Ploughing the field I would have died,  
 Ignorant of it all, would not  
 Have lived on earth an outcast's life,  
 50 Would not have cursed both men and [God] !

[1847  
 Fortress of Orsk.]

І небо невміте, і заспані хвилі

Drowsy waves, sky unwashed and dirty,  
And on the bank there out beyond,  
The rushes sway without a wind  
As they were drunken. . . . God of mercy!  
5 Is it still long I must endure,  
Here, in this prison that holds sure  
Though lockless, by this worthless sea,  
This weary life? It does not speak,  
The yellowed grass, but silent, sways  
10 As if alive, across the plain.  
To speak the truth is not its task . . .  
And there is no one else to ask.

[1848  
Kos-Aral.]

Не для людей, тієї слави

Not for people and their glory,  
Verses bright-embroidered, curly,  
Am I writing—for no others  
Than myself, I sing, my brothers!  
5 It is easier in slavery  
For me, when I write them :  
As from beyond the distant Dnipro  
Words come winging, flying,  
Taking up their stand on paper,  
10 Weeping there and smiling  
Like children, gladdening the soul,  
Cheering and beguiling  
The lonely, luckless soul. And happy,  
I am happy with them,  
15 Like a rich and prosperous father  
With his little children.  
I am glad and joyful then,

- Entreat the Lord of heaven  
 That in this distant land my babes  
 20 Fall not asleep forever,  
 Let my aery children fly  
 To that dear land, their home,  
 Let them tell how hard it was  
 In the world for them!  
 25 And in that joyful family  
 They'll welcome quietly  
 My children, with grey head the father  
 Will nod solemnly.  
 " Better if children such as these  
 30 Were never born ! " the mother  
 Will say, but the young girl will think :  
 " I have grown to love them ! "

[1848 Kos-Aral—  
 1858 St. Petersburg (?).]

### Закувала зозуленька

- Plaintively the cuckoo called  
 In a verdant grove ;  
 Bitterly a girl was weeping—  
 She had none to love.  
 5 And the girl's young joyful years,  
 Like fair flowers fallen  
 On the water, float away,  
 From this world are borne.  
 " Had I father, had I mother,  
 10 Had they wealth to give me,  
 Someone there would be to claim me,  
 Someone who would love me.  
 There is no one ; as an orphan  
 I shall die unwed,  
 15 Somewhere die in loneliness,  
 Underneath a fence."

[1848  
 Kos-Aral.]

He тополю високою

- This is not a lofty poplar  
That the wind is swaying,  
But a girl who, young and lonely,  
Curses fortune, saying :
- 5 “ May the deep sea drown you, fortune,  
Underneath its waves,  
Since you grant not, even now,  
Someone I can love !  
How the girls all kiss their sweethearts,  
10 How they hold them close,  
Embracing, and the love they feel,  
Still I do not know . . .  
And I shall never know. O mother,  
Hard it is to live  
15 A maiden, all one’s life a maiden,  
Never fall in love.”

[1848  
Kos-Aral.]

I широкую долину

- Both the valley stretching wide  
And the gravemound soaring high,  
Both the hour of eventide  
And what was dreamed in days gone by  
5 I shall not forget.

- But what of that? We did not marry  
But parted as we had been only  
Strangers. Meanwhile all the wealth  
Of those precious years of youth  
10 Sped away in vain.

- Now the two of us have withered,  
I—a captive, you—a widow,  
We walk—yet we are not alive,  
We but recall those days gone by  
15 When, of old, we lived.

[1848  
Kos-Aral.]



I знов мені не привезла

- Once more the post has brought to me  
Nothing, nothing from Ukraine!  
For sinful deeds, it seems to be,  
I suffer in this desert plain,  
5 Punished by wrathful God. To know  
The reason why is not for me,  
I do not even wish to know! . . .  
But my heart weeps bitterly  
When I recall what used to be,  
10 Those days, those happenings that once rolled,  
Although not joyful, over me,  
In my own Ukraine of old.  
Of old, great oaths they swore, and vowed  
To be my brothers and sisters dear,  
15 Until we parted like a cloud,  
Without the holy dew of tears.  
So in my old age, I go  
Blaming again and cu—— . . . No, No!  
From cholera they must have died—  
20 Or else a scrap at least they'd try  
To send, of paper . . .  
. . . Ah, from anxiety and grief,  
That I might not watch them read  
Their letters, there, beside the sea,  
25 I'll take a walk along the seashore,  
That I might distract my sorrow,  
Might recall my dear Ukraine,  
Sing a well-loved song again.  
Men would tell them, men betray me ;—  
30 Song has good advice to say me,  
Will advise, distract my grief,  
And speak to me the blessed truth.

[1848  
Kos-Aral.]

### За сонцем хмаронька пливе

- A little cloud swims to the sun,  
With all her crimson borders trailing,  
And beckons to the sun to sleep  
And covers it with rosy veiling,  
5 Cradled in the dark blue sea,  
As a mother lulls her child . . .  
Lovely to the eyes. . . . And now,  
It seems, the heart is still,  
For one little hour of rest,  
10 With God speaks quietly . . .  
Like an enemy, the mist  
Falls upon the sea  
And the little rosy cloud,  
Darkness in its wake  
15 The grey mist rolls and billows out,  
And the silent dark  
Throws its shroud upon the soul,  
And you don't know where to wander,  
Longing, longing for the light,  
20 Like small children for their mother.

[1849  
Kos-Aral.]

### Огні горять, музика грає

- Blaze of lights and music calling,  
Music weeping, rising, falling!  
Like rare and precious diamond,  
Youthful eyes are gleaming fair,  
5 Joy and hope are shining there  
In laughing eyes. All bliss is sent  
To eyes so young and innocent!  
On all sides, people laugh and smile,  
All are dancing, only I  
10 Like one bewitched, look on meanwhile  
And weep in secret, weep and sigh . . .  
Why do I weep? Perhaps that ever  
All eventless, like grey weather,  
All my youth has passed me by.

[1850  
Orenburg.]

# HEOΦITH

## THE NEOPHYTES

### A POEM

Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed.  
Isaiah lvi. 1.

To M. S. Shchepkyn  
In Memory of December 24th, 1857

Beloved of the Muses, Graces,  
I quietly weep as I await you,  
And my thought, so sorrowful,  
I now send unto your soul.  
5 With your kind heart give welcome then  
To my hapless orphan,  
You who are my only friend,  
Our great wonder-worker!  
You will greet the wretched orphan,  
10 She, then, at your side  
Will sail across the Lethe's waters,  
And with tears of fire  
Will fall, some day, upon the earth,  
A parable become  
15 For crucifiers of the nations,  
Tyrants yet to come.

#### [PROLOGUE]

Long in captivity I've dwelt,  
Like a poor thief in a dungeon,  
I see no more than path and field,  
20 And a cross where sits a raven  
In the graveyard—nothing more  
To see from prison. Thank the Lord  
That I see even this much. Still  
Christians live, and pray their fill  
25 To God, and die.  
The cross stands high  
In the graveyard, to one side,

All gilded. Someone there, maybe  
 Not a poor wretch, lies peacefully? . . .  
 30 And pictured there, the Son of God,  
 Crucified for us on the Cross.  
 Thanks to those wealthy orphans who  
 Set up this holy cross. And I—  
 Such is my hapless fate—abide,  
 35 Sit alone, and ever gaze  
 On the high cross from the prison . . .  
 I gaze, I gaze on it, I pray,  
 And my sorrow, bitter sorrow,  
 Like a child replete with food,  
 40 Grows quieter, it seems the prison  
 Grows less narrow, the heart is singing  
 And weeps, and once again is living,  
 And asks Thee, God, and asks Thy blessed  
 And the righteous ones, the sinless,  
 45 What had He done to them, the Blessed  
 Christ, the Nazarene, the only  
 Son of God's chosen, Holy Mary?  
 What had He done to them? And why  
 Did they torture Him, the Blessed?  
 50 Why in fetters bound?  
 For what cause is His Holy Head  
 With thorns and brambles crowned?  
 Why lead Him out to Golgotha  
 With robbers, and between  
 55 Them, hang Him there upon the Cross?  
 For what cause? There speaks  
 Neither the grey-beard Almighty,  
 Nor the holy throng  
 Of His warriors, and champions—  
 60 Eunuchs, speechless, dumb!

Thou who art blessed among women,  
 O Holy Mother, full of grace,  
 Mother of that holy Son  
 On earth! Let me not dwine a slave,  
 65 And waste the fleeting years in vain.  
 O joy of the afflicted ones,  
 Send me that holy word, the new  
 Voice, O send, of holy truth,  
 And that word with holy wisdom  
 70 Do thou revivify, enlighten!

And I'll relate the woes, the flood  
Like rivers, seas—tears stained with blood  
That mother poured out sorrowing  
As once thou didst, received within  
75 Her living soul the viewless realm  
Of him, the Crucified, thy Son.  
Mother of God-made-man, to the end  
A mother's weeping thou hast spent  
To the last tear. I weep, lament,  
80 And pray to thee, lamenting : Send,  
Grant strength to the poor soul, inspire  
That it might speak forth living fire,  
So that the word, as flame apparent,  
Will melt the heart of human-kind,  
85 Throughout Ukraine the word be carried,  
There in Ukraine the word be hallowed,  
The word, the frankincense divine,  
The frankincense of truth. Amen.

## I

Not in our country, dear to God,  
90 In Hetmans' era, or in Tsars',  
But in the heathen Roman land  
This lawlessness was brought to pass.  
It seems, when Decius was Caesar,  
—Or was it under mighty Nero?  
95 I cannot say with certitude.  
Well, Nero, then !  
As yet there stood  
On earth no Russia anywhere,  
When there grew in Italia  
100 A little maiden, and she bloomed  
With beauty, holy, lovely, pure,  
Like a lily blossomed there.  
The mother, watching her, once more  
Grew young, and for the maiden sought  
105 People,—duly sought and found.  
Then in her joyful home she said  
A prayer to Hymen—straightway led  
Her to the stranger's joyful home.  
Time was passing ; this good maid  
110 A happy mother soon became ;

A little child, a son, she bore.  
To her Penates duly prayed,  
And no small offerings she brought  
To the Capitol. She gained, entreating  
115 The Capitoline council, that her  
Firstborn son be duly greeted  
By the blest images. There burns  
Blest fire day and night before the  
Penates. Greatly she rejoices.  
120 To an Alcides her son grows,  
Grows up. . . . Hetaerae ogle him and  
Light a lamp before the image  
Of Venus.

## II

That Star already was beginning  
125 To rise over Bethlehem, high above,  
The word of holy truth and love,  
The Star of the Universe has risen,  
Peace and joy has brought and given  
To men on earth. The Pharisees and  
130 All despicable Judæa  
Stirred itself and roared forth grimly,  
Like an adder in the mud,  
And in man's flesh, the Son of God  
On Golgotha doomed to crucifixion  
135 Between two thieves. And, being drunk  
With blood, Thy blood, to sleep they lay,  
The executioners. From the grave  
Thou didst rise, the Word arose,  
And Thy blest Apostles bore  
140 The word of truth and right through all  
That land so cruelly enslaved.

## III

Then it was that her Alcides  
With a goat-legged old toper came,  
With the lovely young hetaerae,  
145 In a grove on the Appian Way,  
Eagerly removed their dress,  
Drank deep with greater eagerness,

To Priapus their homage paid.  
 But look—Saint Peter on his way  
 150 Bringing the Gospel, bound for Rome,  
 Seeking rest and water came  
 To the grove. “ Blessings be upon you ! ”  
 The apostle, weighed by weariness,  
 So spoke his blessing to the orgy.  
 155 And with a word soft, good and kindly,  
 Announced to them the new Good Tidings,  
 Love, right and good to them did speak,  
 The greatest good in this world’s bournes,  
 Love of one’s brethren. And the Faun,  
 160 Drunken, naked and replete,  
 Your son Alcides, the hetaerae,  
 They all, they all of them knelt down,  
 Fell before Peter, to the ground,  
 Then led the Apostle to the Thermae  
 165 To sup with them. . . .

#### IV

And in the Thermae, too, reigns orgy.  
 With gold and purple, noble halls  
 Are blazing, amphorae smoking, girls  
 All but naked stand before the  
 170 Cyprian’s image, and in chorus  
 Sing the hymn. The guests lie down  
 On couches. There a merry feast  
 Is spread. Loud laughter, noise resounds !  
 In the hetaerae brought the guest,  
 175 The greybeard. Straight the word flowed forth  
 From the blest apostle’s mouth,  
 Flowing like precious oil. The orgy  
 Quietened down, the Cyprian’s priestess,  
 She who was the orgy’s empress,  
 180 Bowed her head, a convert joyful,  
 Before the Apostle, then she rose,  
 And after her they all arose,  
 Into the catacombs they followed  
 The Apostle. Your only son  
 185 Alcides, too, went after them,  
 Following the blest apostle,  
 After the holy teacher followed.

And, joyful, you came out from home,  
To watch the road back from the grove  
190 For your Alcides. He does not come,  
And will come nevermore. Alone,  
You will pray to your Penates,  
And sit alone at home for supper,  
No—not for supper, but to sob,  
195 To sob and curse your luckless lot,  
And grow grey cursing. And O woe,  
You will perish there alone,  
Like a leper.

## V

On the Cross,  
200 Head downwards, then, they crucified  
Holy Peter, the apostle,  
And carried off to Syracuse  
The neophytes in fetters. He,  
Your son Alcides, your own child,  
205 He who is your only kin,  
Your only love, lies rotting in  
Slavery and a captive's fetters.  
You, mother of sorrows, do not know  
Where he suffers, dies—you go  
210 To seek him in Siberia,  
Or rather, Scythia. And you . . .  
And is it only you? O Mother  
Of God, protect, save all of you.  
There is no home, there is no brother,  
215 Sister, nor family beloved,  
Who are not wandering, lost in weeping,  
Who are not tortured in the dungeon,  
Or, exiled far in distant regions,  
In British or in Gallic legions  
220 Are not at martial drill. O Nero,  
Fierce Nero! In the middle way,  
Judgment divine and just will come  
Sudden upon you. They will sail,  
Fly from all corners of the world,  
225 The holy martyrs, they, the brood  
Of holy freedom. Round your couch,  
Round your deathbed they will stand



In chains. And they . . . they will forgive you.  
They are brothers, they are Christians,  
230 And you,—a cur, a cannibal,  
A rabid despot !

## VI

Now it seethes  
With captives there in Syracuse,  
In cells and dungeons. And Medusa  
235 In the tavern, drunken, sleeps  
Among the beggars. Soon she'll wake,  
And, despots, your sweat, your blood she'll take  
For morning-after rites.

The mother  
240 Sought her son everywhere. She failed . . .  
At last to Syracuse she sailed,  
And there, poor lady, she discovered  
Him, chained already, in the prison.  
To see him they would not permit her,  
245 So she was compelled to sit there,  
Near the dungeon. Wait and wait,  
To watch as for a god come straight  
From heaven, for her son, until  
They would drive him out in chains  
250 To sweep the square.

In Rome they're keeping  
A feast, great feast. A crush of people,  
From all the Empire governors,  
Praetorians, senators abound,  
255 Flamens and lictors stand around  
The Capitol. In chorus they  
Sing hymns, from censers and amphorae  
Burn incense, Caesar with his train  
Himself comes forth, and there before him  
260 They bear a statue cast from bronze,  
Carry forth the Caesar's image.

## VII

A strange feast they've devised, indeed,  
The patrician aristocracy,  
And Caesar's learned senate. They,

265 You understand, have praised the Caesar  
 In every way, till they grew sickened  
 To sing this fool their laud and praise,  
 So now, to bring it to the limit,  
 In council they agreed that they  
 270 Henceforth would call the Caesar simply  
 " Jupiter ", and finish with it.  
 To the Governors they've written  
 Throughout the Empire : so and so,  
 Caesar is god, divine and more,  
 275 And to a sculptor gave the order,  
 From bronze a Caesar he should forge.  
 And, *nota bene*, also added  
 That this bronze Caesar had the power  
 Of amnesty. And people now,  
 280 Poor souls, like birds migrating, straggled  
 Romewards, on pilgrimage. This poor lady,  
 She too from Syracuse came sailing,  
 To Caesar-god intent on praying.  
 Is she alone? God! There draw near,  
 285 Thousands of them, bathed in tears,  
 From afar.

Woe unto you !

Whom have you come, then, to entreat?  
 To whom have you brought your tears to plead?  
 290 And with your tears, to whom have you  
 Brought your hope? Woe unto you,  
 You blind, unseeing slaves! With whom,  
 With whom are you entreating, hapless  
 Creatures, sightless slaves and captive?  
 295 The executioner save from doom?  
 Pray to God alone, your father,  
 Pray to truth and right on earth,  
 And bow down before no other  
 On earth. All else is false and lies :  
 300 Priests and emperors. . . .

## VIII

There before  
 Nero, the new Jupiter,  
 The senators yesterday have prayed,  
 And all the patricians ; yesterday

305 The divine favour forth did flow.  
 To one a post or money granting,  
 To one gives Palestine for tax-farming,  
 Something for the brats. To one  
 He Himself deigned to bestow  
 310 His concubine, to be a spouse  
 —Though somewhat faded. But that's nothing,  
 If she's from Caesar. And from others  
 He deigned to take to his harem  
 A sister. This is nothing odd,  
 315 For he's divine, and for a god  
 We ought to offer self, indeed,  
 Not only sisters.  
 Then came the prayer of the praetorians,  
 And to them he gave an order  
 320 That what they wished, so they could do,  
 And after—We would pardon you.  
 And you, plebeian bumpkins, too,  
 Made your prayer, but no-one grants  
*You* pardon. For they cannot even  
 325 Give proper amnesty to you.

## IX

On the third day it was permitted  
 That for the Christians they might pray,  
 And you came too, and made petition.  
 The idol, great in mercy, gave  
 330 Order that they convey the Christians  
 From Syracuse to Rome in chains.  
 You are joyful, filled with gladness,  
 And once more you prayed  
 To the idol. But the idol,  
 335 Jupiter, new-made—  
 Only see the kind of feast  
 That in the Coliseum  
 He is planning. And meanwhile  
 Go you out to meet him,  
 340 Your son. But be not overjoyed,  
 Rejoice not much, poor lady,  
 For as yet you do not know  
 This god, new-made and kindly.  
 Meanwhile the mother of Alcides

- 345 Hastened out to meet him,  
 With the mothers went to give  
 The holy ones their greeting  
 On the very shore. You went,  
 Could hardly keep from singing,  
 350 And to Caesar-Jupiter  
 Your praise was ever ringing.  
 " Jupiter, a Jupiter !  
 One does not grudge to call him  
 Jupiter, indeed—and I,  
 355 Poor fool, went off, imploring  
 The Athenian Jupiter.  
 A fool, and nothing more ! "
- And quietly to the divine  
 Caesar she made her prayer.  
 360 On she walked beside the swamps,  
 On the Tiber gazing,  
 And up the Tiber, from beyond  
 The trees, a barge came sailing,  
 Or a galley. On the galley  
 365 They bring the neophytes  
 In chains and in the midst, your son.  
 And he, your own dear child,  
 Is fettered to the very mast,  
 No new neophyte  
 370 Is he, but an apostle of  
 The mighty word of Christ.  
 Such he is ! Do you hear,  
 From his chains he sings,  
 Your martyr.
- 375 " A new psalm unto the Lord,  
 New praise let us proclaim,  
 In righteous chorus with a heart  
 Free from guile and blame.  
 On tympanum and psaltery  
 380 Let us sing forth His praises ;  
 How God smiteth the unrighteous,  
 And the righteous aideth.  
 The blessed ones in glory on  
 Quiet couches speak the fame  
 385 And praise of God, for aye rejoicing,  
 Laud His Holy name.  
 In their hands good swords they hold,

Whetted and two-edgéd,  
 For instruction to the people,  
 390 And to the Gentiles, vengeance.  
 Insatiate emperors they'll chain  
 In fetters of strong iron,  
 And the wrists of the far-famed  
 With heavy chains they'll bind.  
 395 And with righteous judgment will  
 The unjust be condemnéd,  
 And glory will arise forever,  
 Glory to the blesséd."

X

And you stood there like a dark rock  
 400 On the bank above the water,  
 Did not listen, did not sob,  
 But echoed "Alleluia" after  
 The mothers to the Christians there.  
 The clank of chains rang through the air  
 405 Like bells. Your child, your only son,  
 The new apostle, having made  
 The Sign of Christ's blest Cross, intoned :  
 " Pray for him, O pray, my brethren,  
 For the fierce executioner,  
 410 In prayer I bid you to remember  
 Him. Do not bow down before  
 His overweening pride, my brothers.  
 Prayer is for God alone ! But he—  
 Let him rage upon this earth,  
 415 Let him the prophet smite and crush,  
 Let him crucify all of us.  
 Grandsons, already in the womb  
 Conceived, will grow to manhood soon—  
 Not as avengers they will strike,  
 420 As holy warriors of Christ.  
 And without fire, without sword  
 The captains of the Lord will rise,  
 The heathen thousand-fold will fly,  
 Ten-thousand-fold will flee before  
 425 The saints. Pray, brethren."

They prayed,  
 Before the Cross they made their prayer.

Chained in thongs, the neophytes  
Prayed joyfully. To you all hail,  
430 All praise to you, souls young and bright,  
All praise to you, O holy knights!  
To you for evermore, all hail!

## XI

And into Rome the galley sailed.  
A week goes by. The drunken Caesar,  
435 Having accepted Zeus's tonsure,  
Arranges Zeus's jubilee.  
Rome throbs with joy. They bear before  
The idol ladanum and myrrh  
By cartloads, and herd droves of Christians  
440 To the Coliseum. As it were  
A slaughterhouse, blood flows. And Rome  
Throbs with joy. Gladiator, patrician,  
Both are drunk, with blood and smoke  
Stupefied. Rome drinks away  
445 The fall of glory, celebrates  
The exequies of the Scipian era.  
Rage, rage, base dotard! Take your pleasure  
In your harems. A holy star  
Is rising beyond the sea afar.  
450 Not with holy righteous thunder  
Will they slay you, but with blunted  
Knife will slash, and with an axebutt  
Slay you like a cur.

## XII

A second day

455 The arena roars. In the arena  
The golden sand of Lydia  
Was covered with red purple, kneaded  
Into a muddy swamp of blood.  
In the arena Nazarenes  
460 From Syracuse were not yet seen.  
But the third day they too were brought  
In chains, by guards with naked swords,  
To the slaughter-house together.  
The arena like roaring beasts re-echoed.

465 Proudly into the arena,  
 Singing a psalm, your son stepped forth.  
 Like one possessed, the drunken Caesar  
 Roared with laughter. From the vault  
 A leopard sprang upon the stage,  
 470 Stepped forward, glanced . . . the holy blood  
 Gushed forth. Across the Coliseum  
 A storm was borne with roaring thunder,  
 Once more grew calm. Where were you then?  
 Where had you hidden? Why not fall  
 475 On him, your Caesar, him your All-  
 Holy! No, there stood to keep  
 Guard over him, in ranks three deep,  
 Lictors around your Zeus, and there,  
 Behind your holy Jupiter,  
 480 The gate of iron is shut and barred—  
 And you were left there all alone,  
 There at the gate, all, all alone.  
 What could you do? “O sorrow, sorrow!  
 O my bitter fate of sorrow!  
 485 What shall I do? Of him bereft  
 What shall I do? And who is left  
 To lean on?” And the poor soul gazed  
 All round—and then against the wall,  
 Against the wall she struck her head,  
 490 And swooning fell as she were dead.  
 Before the very gate.

### XIII

From the spectacle, when the evening  
 Came, the holy Caesar  
 Hid in the Thermae with his lictors.  
 495 There the Coliseum  
 Stood without Caesar, without Romans,  
 And, it seemed, was weeping.  
 Lone, like a mountain in the plain,  
 There in the midst of Rome,  
 500 The Coliseum looming black.  
 Quiet, quiet blows  
 The wind from beyond the Tiber, from  
 Albanum, over Rome.  
 High over the black Coliseum

505 Sails the round-faced moon,  
As from behind dark smoke. The earth,  
First-born of creation,  
Rested on the night's calm bosom,  
Only we, O Adam,  
510 Your progeny of ill-intent,  
Lie not down to rest,  
Till in the coffin, in that Eden  
Lost by our neglect.  
Like curs after a stinking bone,  
515 We tear and rend each other.  
And hurl our insults at you, even,  
Lazy-bones fore-father!

#### XIV

She rested there awhile,  
The mother, beaten near to death,  
520 The strength of night revived  
The force of life in her again.  
She rose and wandered round  
Near the gateway, closed and barred,  
Whispering about  
525 Something. Murmured curses on  
Blest Caesar? Yes, maybe,  
Curses too. . . . She stole towards  
The gateway silently,  
Stood there listening—and smiled,  
530 Murmured quietly  
Something to herself, some word,  
And, hidden there beside  
The gate, sat quietly sorrowing.  
The gate soon opened wide,  
535 And on chariots and carts from  
The slaughter-house, the Coliseum,  
They brought the bodies of the saints  
Down to the Tiber. For it is  
Their wont to fatten Tiber's fish  
540 On murdered saints, to swell them for  
The imperial table. And the mother  
Rose, looked round upon all sides,  
And, clasping her bruised head, behind  
The waggons, silently she made



545 Her way, like a black ghostly shade,  
Tiberwards, and the grey-eyed Scythians,  
Waggon-drivers, slaves of slaves,  
Thought that this was Morok's sister  
Come from Hell, to see the Romans  
550 Well on the way to Hell. They hurled  
The slain into the stream, then homewards  
The Scythians with their carts returned.  
And you alone remained there grieving,  
On the bank, and watched the ripples  
555 Grow in ever widening circles,  
Spreading, spreading there above him,  
There above your righteous son!  
You watched, till there at last remained  
No living trace upon the water,  
560 And then you smiled—and straightway after  
Sobbed tears of bitter, dreadful pain.  
Then to the Crucified you prayed  
For the first time, for us. He saved  
You, Mary's Son, the Crucified.  
565 And you received the living word  
That in your living soul He poured.  
And you to market-place and palace  
The word of right, the word of God,  
The Living Lord and True you bore.

8.xii.1857  
Nizhniy Novgorod.

Ой діброво — темний гаю!

- Oak-grove, darkly-shadowed spinney,  
Thrice in the year's course  
A new robe you wear. . . . A rich  
Father must be yours !  
5 Firstly in a cloak of green  
He adorns you richly,  
And himself is all amazed  
To look upon his spinney.  
Looks his fill upon his darling,  
10 Well-beloved and young,  
Takes her then and robes her newly  
In a golden gown ;  
Wraps her in a costly mantle  
Of the purest white,  
15 Then, all weary from his labours,  
Lies down for the night.

15.i.1860  
St. Petersburg.

І день іде, і ніч іде

Day comes and goes, night comes and goes . . .  
Sinking your head in hands clasped tight,  
You wonder why there still comes no  
Apostle of wisdom, truth and right.

5.xi [1860  
St. Petersburg.]

Якось-то йдучи уночі

- Once I was walking in the night  
Beside the Neva, and my wits  
Were pondering deeply as I walked :  
“ If it had been,” I thought, “ if it  
5 Had been the slaves would not submit,  
There would not stand on Neva’s banks  
These palaces as a living shame,  
A brother, a sister would remain ;  
But now . . . no, there is nothing now,—  
10 Not even God, nor demi-god :  
And, with their brats, dog-trainers reign,  
And we—the clever kennel-men—  
Weep on, and breed their hounds for them! . . . ”  
So, walking at night, I chanced to be  
15 Beside the Neva, and my wits  
Formed such fine thoughts ; I had not seen  
That over on the other bank  
A kitten, as if in a pit,  
Blinked both his eyes : for there were lit  
20 Near the Apostle’s Gate—twin lamps.  
Startled from my dreams, I crossed  
Myself, and spat three times for sure,  
Then once again in thought was lost,  
The same deep thoughts I had before.

[13.xi.1860  
St. Petersburg.]

Чи не покинуть нам, небого

Should we not then cease, my friend,  
My poor dear neighbour, make an end  
Of versifying useless rhymes?  
Prepare our waggons for the time  
5 When we that longest road must wend?  
Into the other world, my friend,  
To God we'll hasten to our rest . . .  
We have grown weary, utter-tired,  
A little wisdom we've acquired,  
10 It should suffice! To sleep is best,  
Let us now go home to rest . . .  
A home of gladness, you may know!

No, let us not depart, nor go,—  
It is early still,  
15 We shall yet take walks together,  
Sit, and gaze our fill,  
Gaze upon the world, my fortune,  
See how wide it spreads,  
Wide and joyful, it is both  
20 Bright, and of great depth!  
We shall yet take walks, my star,  
On a hill climb high,  
And take our rest together. . . . And  
Your sister-stars, meanwhile,  
25 The ageless ones, will start to shine,  
Through the heavens glide . . .  
Let us linger then, my sister,  
Thou, my holy bride,  
And with lips unsullied we shall  
30 Make our prayer to God,  
And then set out quietly  
On that longest road,  
Over Lethe's plumbless depths,  
Waters dark and swarthy,  
35 Grant me then thy blessing, friend,  
With thy holy glory.

While this and that and all such wear on,  
Straight let us go, as the crow flies,  
To Aesculapeus for advice,  
40 If he can outwit old Charon  
And spinning Fate. . . . And then, as long as  
The old sage would change his purpose,  
We would create, reclining there,  
An epic, soaring everywhere  
45 Above the earth, hexameters  
We'd twine, and up the attic stairs  
Take them for mice to gnaw. Then we  
Would sing prose, yet with harmony  
And not haphazard.

50                                 Holy friend,  
Companion to my journey's end,  
Before the fire has ceased to glow,  
Let us to Charon, rather, go!  
Over Lethe's plumbless depths,  
55 Waters dark and swarthy,  
Let us sail, let us bear  
With us holy glory,  
Ageless, young for evermore . . .  
Or—friend, let it be!  
60 I will do without the glory,  
If they grant it me,  
There on the banks of Phlegethon,  
Or beside the Styx, in heaven,  
As if by the broad Dnipro, there  
65 In a grove, a grove primaeval,  
A little house I'll build, and make  
An orchard all around it growing,  
And you'll fly to me in the shades,  
There, like a beauty, I'll enthrone you ;  
70 Dnipro and Ukraina we  
Shall recollect, gay villages  
In woodlands, gravehills in the steppes,  
And we shall sing right merrily.

15.ii [1861  
St. Petersburg.]

## NOTES

The references are to pages (in italics) and lines (in ordinary type). After the title of each poem, the year of its first appearance in print is given, preceded by "F.p." (= "first published in . . ."). If a poem was first published outside the Russian empire, the date of its first publication in Russia is also given. Sometimes certain noteworthy facts about the manuscript are given before the publication year, and the censorship history of the poem after this. Where earlier translations into English exist, the names of the translators are given, preceded by "E.t." (= "English translation[s] by . . ."). For further details of these translations the reader is referred to the Bibliography which concludes this volume.

V.S.

### FRONTISPIECE.

Shevchenko's self-portrait; originally done in sepia in 1845 (i.e. when he was aged thirty-one). The original has not been preserved, but in 1860 (cf. the signature and year discernible on the sheet of paper represented at the bottom of the portrait) Shevchenko etched a copy from it, and this copy is the basis of the present reproduction.

i, the epigraph. *Ivan Frankó* (1856-1916), a great Ukrainian poet second only to Shevchenko; also eminent as a notable prose writer, translator, critic, scholar in various fields (literature, folk-lore, history, economics), linguist, journalist. Among his translations, those of Shevchenko's poems into German are noteworthy. Being greatly influenced by Shevchenko, he wrote several scholarly and literary studies about the life and works of Ukraine's greatest poet (one of them was first published in English: see the Bibliography). The quotation serving as the epigraph is from: I. Franko, *Tvory v dvadtsyaty tomakh*, XVII, Kiev, 1955, p. 14 (f.p. as a series of essays "Prychynky do otsinnennya poezyi Tarasa Shevchenka", *Svit*, L'viv, 1881-2, then separately: *Temne tsarstvo*, L'viv, 1914). The two poems to which the quotation refers and which in fact form the subject of Franko's study are "The Dream" and "The Caucasus" (26, 69), two of Shevchenko's most important works. The italics ("that Realm of Darkness") are in Franko's original.

viii, 9-35. *Paul Selver* (born 1888): the well-known authority on Czech and Slovak literature, an eminent translator from Slavonic and West European languages and a poet in his own right; the doyen of English translators of Shevchenko. His version of the "Testament" was first published in 1915 (cf. the Bibliography).

### xi. TARAS SHEVCHENKO: THE MAN AND THE SYMBOL.

The author of this critical essay, W. K. Matthews (1901-1958), was, for the last ten years before his death, Professor of Russian Language and Literature in the University of London and Head of the Department of Languages and Literature at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies. An extremely erudite and versatile scholar, polyglot, poet and translator, he counted the Ukrainian language and literature among his numerous interests. Thus, to mention only a few examples, in 1949 there appeared his article "The Ukrainian System of Declension" (*Language*, vol. 25, No. 2, Baltimore); in 1951, a poem translated from the Ukrainian of Yu. Fed'kovych (*Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 29, No. 73, London); in 1955, he edited J. Bojko's article on Shevchenko (cf. note 70, 65 below and the Bibliography). From 1950, most volumes of the *Slavonic Review* included reviews by Professor Matthews of books in the field of

Ukrainian. One of his chief interests was phonetics; he investigated a great variety of languages from this point of view, and his last phonetic article concerns Ukrainian. Moreover, it was at the time when he was the Head of the Department of Languages and Literature that the teaching of Ukrainian was in 1955 introduced for the first time in the School of Slavonic Studies of the University of London.

The essay is reprinted here (f.p. London 1951) with the following changes: the International (Czech-style) transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabets in the first edition has been replaced by the English-style system (as detailed by Matthews in "The Latinisation of Cyrillic Characters", *Slavonic Review*, vol. 30, No. 75, June 1952, pp. 531-48); italic type (absent in the first edition) has been introduced, following Matthews's usual practice in his other publications; two or three misprints or slips have been rectified.

#### 1. BEWITCHED.

F.p. 1841. E.t. (1, 1-12 only) Ewach, Weir.

1, 1-12. These lines have been set to music, and are now one of the best-known Ukrainian songs.

33-4. The face of a dead Cossack would be covered by a silk kerchief (usually red) before burial.

2, 37. *On a foreign field*: this is a literal translation of the Ukrainian *Na chuzhomu poli*. It is a lucky coincidence that, since Rupert Brooke's *Soldier*, English has possessed the identical idiom, with almost identical connotations. (*Translator's note*.)

40. This is a phrase which frequently recurs in Shevchenko's poetry (cf. 2, 78; 11, 44; 12, 40).

45-6. Unmarried girls wore their hair in long plaits, while the kerchief was the symbol of the dignity of a married woman.

66. *Danube*: any large river in Ukrainian folk-lore (cf. also 56, 40, 49).

3, 119. *The Horde*: sc. the Tartars, whose incursions upon Ukrainian territory were still fresh in the minds of Ukrainians (cf. 5, 192, 23, 18).

4, 130. *Dwining*: see note 97, 64.

159. It is a Ukrainian superstition that by counting a cuckoo's calls one may learn how many years one will live.

6, 215. *The guelder-rose* was a symbol of maidenhood (cf. 87, 15-16).

#### 7. SONG.

F.p. 1841. E.t. Manning, Weir.

#### 8. O MY THOUGHTS, MY HEARTFELT THOUGHTS.

F.p. in full 1840; reprinted in 1844; however, in the 1860 edition of *Kobzar* the censor banned 8, 28—10, 100. E.t. Manning, Weir.

This poem served as the introduction to the first edition of *Kobzar* (1840).

8, 1-8, 28-9, 39, 10, 101-116. These parts have been set to music and enjoy a very wide popularity.

9, 39. *Among strangers*: this poem was written in St. Petersburg (cf. 10, 91-6).

43. *Staves, banners*: in the original *bulava*, a staff borne by a Hetman as an ensign of his authority; and *bunchuh* (*bunchuk*), another ensign of a Hetman's dignity consisting of a wooden rod with a metal ball at one end under which was fixed a horse-tail.

58-66. The idea of freedom being buried in a gravemound, or in the Great Vault, is developed in "The Great Vault" (41) and in "The Plundered Grave" (21). *The Black Eagle*: the Russian Imperial Eagle. *The minstrels*: this image is expanded in Part III of "The Great Vault" (51).

10, 79. The original line—*Nekhay zlydni zhyvut' try dni*—literally, "let miseries live three days", may be taken to mean "let miseries live three days and then perish", as has been kindly suggested to the present editor by Herbert Marshall. This interpretation, however, conflicts with the subsequent lines.

11. THE NIGHT OF TARAS.

F.p. 1840 with the censorship cuts of 11, 15-20, 12, 21-40, and 14, 139-40. The same cuts remained in the 1844 and 1860 editions of *Kobzar*. The cut lines have been restored from manuscript additions in some copies of the 1860 *Kobzar*, but until quite recently both of the first two censored passages used to be placed together after line 14. The present arrangement (in use during the last decade) has just been finally confirmed by the discovery of a copy of the 1840 *Kobzar* with no cuts whatsoever (apparently a very small number of copies was printed with uncensored versions for private circulation only) (Yu. Mezhenko, "Nevidome vydannya 'Kobzarya' 1840 roku," *Literaturna hazeta*, Kiev, 3 March 1961, p. 2). The photograph of a page from this copy (published by Mezhenko in his article) reveals a hitherto unrecorded variant of 12, 36: *Polyaky panuyut'* ("The Poles now rule"). E.t.: Hunter, Manning.

11, 15-16. *The Hetmanate* ended in 1764.

41. *Lyman*: the Dnieper estuary.

55. Polish landowners used to lease Orthodox churches to Jews.

12, 61-2. *Severyn Nalyvayko*: the leader of a Ukrainian rebellion (1591-6) against the Poles. His army was called the Kravchyna; however, this appellation may also refer to Nalyvayko himself. He was captured and executed in Warsaw in 1597.

63. *Pavlyuk, recte Pavlo But*: one of the leaders of a Ukrainian rebellion (1637) against the Poles. Executed in Warsaw in 1638.

65. *Taras Fedorovych*, also known as Tryasylo, elected as the Zaporozhian Hetman in 1628, led a rebellion against the Poles in the spring of 1630. After three weeks' fighting, the decisive battle was fought on 22 May near Pereyaslav on the river Al'ta (a tributary of the Trubezh, which is a left tributary of the Dnieper), when the rebels routed the army of the Hetman of the Polish Crown, S. Koniecpolski.

13, 83. *Trubaylo*, or Trubezh: see note 12, 65.

93. *Otaman*: a Cossack chief or commander, subordinate to a Hetman

15. THE BOAT.

F.p. 1909.

16. HAMALIYA.

F.p. 1844. E.t. Hunter, Manning, Weir.

16, 6. *Great Meadow (Velykyy Luh)*: the old name of lowlands by the left bank of the Dnieper, near its estuary, next to the Zaporozhian Sich (see note 16, 31-2); a hunting and fishing ground of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.

17. *Scutari*: the city on the eastern side of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople (Byzantium, Istanbul); the Sultan's summer residence was there, and also the prisons and the slaves' quarters.

26. *Lyman*: see note 11, 41.

28. *Grandsire*: the Dnieper.

31-2. *Khortytsya (Isle)*: a large island on the Dnieper. The original Zaporozhian Sich was situated there (a Cossack stronghold, founded in 1552, destroyed first by Peter I in 1709 and finally by Catherine II in 1775).

17, 35. *The Turkish Lady*: Turkey.

44. Zaporozhians used to raid Constantinople by sea and free Ukrainian captives.

52. *Hamaliya* is not known as a historical personage.

20, 176. *The Monk*: Hetman Petro Sahaydachny-Konashevych (1614-22); led several successful raids on Turkish fortresses which were at the same time important slave trade centres.

177. *Galata*: the commercial quarter of Constantinople.

178. *Ivan Pidkova*: a Cossack otaman; led some raids against Turkey and Moldavia in the 16th century. The historical sources are, however, silent about his sea raids. Executed by the Polish government in 1578.



### 21. THE PLUNDERED GRAVE.

In the manuscript confiscated at Shevchenko's arrest, the officials of the Third Department (the tsarist secret police) underlined several lines (21, 3-4, 17-20, 35-22, 46), apparently as incriminating.

F.p. in Leipzig 1859, in Russia 1907. Banned by the tsarist censorship of the reaction period following the 1905 revolution from the 1912 popular edition of Kobzar (publ. by Iohanson in Kiev), and also by the Soviet censorship from the Kiev popular editions of 1950-55. E.t. Ewach.

21, 17. *Bohdan*: Khmel'nyts'ky, the Hetman of Ukraine (1648-57) who concluded the Pereyaslav treaty in 1654 which resulted ultimately in the incorporation of Ukraine into the Russian (then Muscovite) State. Shevchenko consistently condemned Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky for this deed.

29-30. Much of the land in Ukraine was leased to Jews in Shevchenko's time. Catherine II promoted German immigration into Ukraine.

35-22, 53. Cf. "The Great Vault" (41).

### 23. CHYHYRYN.

As in the previous poem, several lines were underscored by the same Third Department (23, 17-25, 27-30, 24, 45-6, 63-4).

F.p. in L'viv 1863 (in full), in Russia 1867 with the tsarist censor's cuts of 24, 45-6, 25, 83-6. The full text appeared in 1907, but the whole poem was banned again by the Soviet censorship from the 1950-55 Kiev popular editions.

23, 1. *Chyhyryn*: the capital of Ukraine (1649-1676) and the residence of the Hetmans, 140 miles S.E. of Kiev.

18. *Hordes*: cf. note 3, 119.

25, 83-4. These lines (in the original "*Spy, Chyhyryne, nekhay hynut' u voroha dity*") are ambiguous: they could equally well be translated "Let the children of thy foemen perish". (*Translator's note.*)

85. *Hetman*: probably Khmel'nyts'ky (cf. note 21, 17).

### 26. THE DREAM.

The number of lines scored off in the manuscript by the Third Department is considerable: 28, 83, 87, 89-90, 93, 29, 125, 129-33, 30, 162, 32, 263-6, 33, 288, 312-35, 387, 36, 412-37, 488, 38, 517-39, 579. The lines 33, 312-19, 36, 438-40 were marked "NB".

F.p. in L'viv 1865; in Russia in full 1907. Severely cut by the censor in the 1911-14 editions (33, 286-37, 488, 39, 540-71) and banned altogether from the 1912 Iohanson popular edition. E.t. Manning, Weir.

The subtitle "A comedy" may have been suggested by Dante's *Commedia (Inferno)*.

26, 23. "*The Fatherland*": in the original *otechestvo* (Russ.).

29, 130-1. *The poll-tax* had to be paid for male "souls" appearing in the rolls compiled after the last census; hence a widow had to pay for her dead husband for several years. The same fact was used by Gogol' as the basis for the plot of his *Dead Souls*.

153-4. Cf. 69, 1-2.

30, 183-32, 257. The scene of this part is Siberia.

32, 242. *King of freedom*: apparently a generalized image of a political prisoner, probably of the Decembrists or Polish insurgents of 1831.

268. *The city*: St. Petersburg.

274. *Muscovite*: Russian.

33, 286. *He*: Nicholas I (reigned 1825-55).

288. *She*: the tsarina Alexandra Fedorovna.

292. *Tin-buttoned*: sc. in civil service uniform.

315-9. Shevchenko's description of the tsarina's appearance agrees with the testimony of a contemporary, the Marquis de Custine, who noted that she was extremely thin; "On entering the chapel," he continues, "she was deeply moved, and looked as if she were at the point of death; a nervous convulsion contorted the features of her face, and even sometimes made her

head shake" (Le Marquis de Custine, *La Russie en 1839*, II, Paris, 1843, p. 10).

35, 386. *River*: the Neva.

390-4. See note 36, 431-45.

395-7. *Fortress and belfry*: the Fortress with the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, on an island opposite the Winter Palace. *Like a whetted awl*: an extremely tall and thin spire surmounting the belfry. Spires were Peter's favourite architectural feature.

400-36, 414. The famous equestrian statue to Peter I (the Great) (r. 1682-1725) erected next to the Winter Palace by Catherine II (r. 1762-96) in 1782, with an inscription in Russian and Latin: "*Petru Pervomu Yekaterina Vtoraya, leta 1782*"—"Petro Primo Catharina Secunda MDCCLXXXII." Peter I is represented in a Roman toga, crowned with laurels. Cf. also 37, 471.

36, 416-17. Cf. 48, 261-6, and note.

418-19. Catherine II abolished the vestiges of Ukrainian autonomy in 1764 and introduced serfdom.

431-45. Peter I used Ukrainian Cossacks extensively in the first quarter of the 18th century for various earthworks, and most of them died of privation, disease and heavy work. The numbers of those drafted reached 40,000 a year in 1709, 1710 and 1712. Shevchenko's source, *Istoriya Rusov*, has this to say concerning these works: "The Little Russian [sc. Ukrainian] regiments, continuing the works on the fortifications and canals, were divided into large detachments or corps, and were, at Tsaritsyn, under the command of Cornet General Ivan Sulyma and an engineer named Perr, where they erected fortifications against the Kuban' Hordes and dug the canal to connect the rivers Don and Volga. On Lake Ladoga they were under the command of the following, changing through the years: Pavlo Polubotok, proxy Hetman and commander of Chernihiv, Andriy Markovych, commander of Lubny, Ivan Chernysh, proxy Hetman and commander of Poltava. They drained impenetrable swamps and dug canals for the passage of boats to St. Petersburg, the city newly-built by the tsar to his name in the northernmost swamps, by the estuary of the Neva, the city built almost entirely on stakes and dikes, which was the grave of countless people who perished there from humidity, heavy work and cold" (G. Konissky, *Istoriya Rusov ili Maloy Rossii*, Moscow, 1846, pp. 223-4).

431. *Hlukhiv*: Ukraine's capital after Hetman Mazeppa, 170 miles E.N.E. of Kiev, near the northern border with Russia.

435-6. *Proxy Hetman*: Pavlo Polubotok who was appointed to this office after the death of Hetman Skoropads'ky in 1722. Ukrainian affairs were transferred at that time from the Russian Foreign Office to the Senate (which administered Russian provinces). When Polubotok demanded the restoration of the rights of Ukraine, Peter I summoned him to St. Petersburg, where he was subsequently arrested and where he died in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul in 1724.

438-37, 453. Polubotok's words addressed to Peter I seem to contain strong echoes of the account in the *Istoriya Rusov* just mentioned above. There, in the course of his long speech before Peter, he also says this: ". . . we have been thrown into the most extreme slavery, we have to pay a humiliating and unbearable tribute, and are compelled to excavate fortifications and canals and to drain impenetrable swamps, manuring all these with the bodies of our dead who drop in their thousands from heavy work, hunger and the bad climate . . . I know that fetters and murky dungeons are in store for us, and there we shall be made to die of hunger and privations, in accordance with the Muscovite custom; but while still alive, truly I will say to you, O Tsar, that you shall without fail account for both our ruin and that of the whole of our people before the King of all Kings, God Almighty!" The anonymous author of the *Istoriya* then quotes the tradition telling of Polubotok's last words to Peter shortly before his death: ". . . I believe without any doubt that for my innocent

suffering and for that of my fellows we shall be judged by our common and impartial Judge, God Almighty, and soon both of us shall stand before Him, and it will be there that Peter and Paul [=Pavlo, Polubotok] shall be adjudged" (*op. cit.*, pp. 229-31).

37, 470. *White birds*: the souls of Cossacks (cf. note 36, 431-45).

40. WHY WEIGHS THE HEART HEAVY?  
F.p. 1861.

40. HAVE NO ENVY FOR THE RICH MAN.  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Weir.

41. THE GREAT VAULT.  
F.p. in full in Prague 1876; in Russia 1907. Large parts were cut by the tsarist censorship in the 1911-14 editions (43, 70-44, 133, 154-45, 166, 46, 204-6, 48, 275-6, 293-49, 300); the whole poem was banned from the popular editions of 1912 and of 1950-55 (this time by the Soviet censorship). E.t. Manning.

41, 2. *Subotiv* was Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky's village near Chyhyryn (cf. note 23, 1).

3. *The church* in Subotiv was built by Khmel'nyts'ky.

13. "*The Great Vault*" is the name given by the people to Bohdan's (Khmel'nyts'ky's) vault in Subotiv where his many treasures were hidden. In Shevchenko's time it used to be said among the people that if Moscow were to discover that Great Vault, she would utterly destroy Ukraine. (*The note of V. Domanyts'ky, the editor of the 1907 Kobzar.*) This seems not to have been Shevchenko's idea, as may be gathered from 41, 8-13.

15. *Prisya*: an arbitrary name given to the First Soul. The other two souls are without names.

20-1. *Yurus'*: Yuriy Khmel'nyts'ky, Bohdan's younger son, Hetman of Ukraine 1659-63 and 1677-81.

22. *Hetman's wife*: Hanna Khmel'nyts'ka.

42, 28. *Chyhyryn*: see note 23, 1.

49. *St. Philip's E'en*: the original has the vague *v Pylypiuku*, which may mean St. Philip's Day or Tide. In fact, however, the day of the Pereyaslav Council, when Khmel'nyts'ky and the Cossacks swore allegiance to the Muscovite tsar Alexius (cf. note 21, 17) was Sunday, 8 January 1654, while St. Philip's Day is 9 January (St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, 1507-70; murdered by Maljuta Skuratov by order of Ivan IV [the Terrible]).

56. To cross someone's path with full pails is, according to a popular superstition, a good omen for that person, or, if done intentionally, it means a wish of success and good luck to him or her.

43, 72. The watering of a man's horse by a girl was a sign of her being favourably disposed towards him.

74. *Baturyn*: the capital of the Hetmans of Ukraine after Chyhyryn until 1708; situated on the Seym, a left tributary of the Desna (which is, in turn, a left tributary of the Dnieper). (Cf. also note 23, 1). *Poltava*: see note 43, 102.

77-83. In August 1708 Mazeppa, the Hetman of Ukraine (1687-1709), joined forces with Charles XII of Sweden who waged war against Peter I. Mazeppa's aim was to shake off Russia's overlordship in Ukraine, and he was followed by many Cossacks of all ranks. When Peter learnt of Mazeppa's action, he demanded of Dmytro Chechel', who was commander of the garrison of Baturyn, the surrender of the fortress. This the latter refused, and Men'shikov, in charge of the Russian siege, captured the fortress on 1 November 1708 after a secret entry had been betrayed to him. Most of the town's population were put to death, and the town destroyed. *Seym*: see note 43, 74.

100. *The tsar*: Peter I.

102. *Poltava*: a town 80 miles W.S.W. of Kharkiv; the scene of the battle of 27 June 1709 in which Peter I defeated the joint forces of Charles XII and Mazeppa.

44, 123. *Carved king-beam*: with an inscription referring to the date of building and the name of the person by whom the house was built.

134. *Kaniv*: a town 65 miles to the S.E. of Kiev, on the Dnieper.

138-9. Catherine II travelled in state down the Dnieper in 1787; Kaniv provided the highlights of her journey on 25 April.

45, 168. *Chuta*: one of the largest forests near the Zaporozhian Sich (cf. note 16, 31-2).

176. *Bohdan*: Khmel'nyts'ky.

180-3. The reference is to the Polish uprising of 1830-31. After its suppression by the Russians, many of its active participants fled to Western Europe. General M. Radziwill (*recte* with crossed *l's*) (1778-1850) was for some time Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary Polish Army; afterwards imprisoned by the Russians until 1836. T. Potocki (1809-61), another prominent Polish noble, an officer, also took part in the uprising.

46, 197-8. *Decembrists*: organisers and participants in the ill-starred revolt against the tsarist autocracy on 14 December 1825 in St. Petersburg, and also in December-January near Kiev. Of the leaders, five were executed and 106 sent to Siberia (concentration hard labour camps or exile). Both the Polish rebels and the Decembrists had Shevchenko's greatest admiration and sympathy.

205-10. *Iron roadway*: the Moscow-St. Petersburg railway, the first in Russia, built in 1843-51; extreme privations and hard work claimed thousands of victims. The workers were all serfs. *The Ukases*: of Nicholas I, concerning the building of the railway.

212. *Baron M. A. Von Korf*: the chief of police under Nicholas I; he was in charge of the provision of the labour force for the railway.

47, 219-21. Suppression of the 1830-1 Polish revolt by Nicholas I.

230. *N. M. Karamzin* (1766-1826): a famous Russian writer and the author of the monumental *Istoriya gosudarstva Rossiyskogo* ("History of the Russian State") in 12 volumes.

241-2. Cf. 78, 186-9.

247-8. Reference to the various changing alliances of the Cossacks with the Poles, Turks, and Russians.

250-1. Reference to the destruction of Ukrainian independence brought about by Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky's alliance with the Russians (cf. note 42, 49).

253. Charles XII.

48, 256. See note 43, 77-83.

257-9. *Romny*, or *Romen*: a town on the Sula, a left tributary of the Dnieper, 135 miles E. of Kiev. Here, mass executions of Mazepa's followers took place.

259-61. Many thousands of Ukrainian Cossacks had to fight Peter's wars against the Swedes, in particular on the territory of Finland, with great losses in men.

261-6. Peter's various building projects (which, in fact, began as early as 1700) in which many thousands of Ukrainian Cossacks and serfs perished. *The Oreł'*: a left tributary of the Dnieper along which Peter I built border fortifications against the Tartars. *Ladoga*: the Ladoga Canal, where the worst working conditions prevailed (cf. note 36, 431-45).

267-8. See note 36, 435-6.

271-2. Cf. Shevchenko's poem "Irzhavets'" (not in the present selection).

275. *Torturer*: Ivan IV (the Terrible) (the Muscovite tsar in 1547-1584).

276. *Peterkin*: Peter I.

277-80. German bureaucracy, scholars, technical and military experts introduced into Russia by Peter I.

289-90. After the destruction of the Sich (cf. note 16, 31-2), Catherine II gave much of its land to German settlers (cf. note 21, 29-30).

49, 310. *The church*: see note 41, 3.

311. "*The Bee*": *Severnaya Pchela* ("The Northern Bee"), a reactionary pro-government Russian paper published (1825-64) in St. Petersburg. (The curious name derives from *Melissa* ["The Bee"], the title

of Byzantine collections of maxims, translated into Church Slavonic in 12th-century Kiev.)

319. *Ivan Gonta*: one of the most important leaders of the Haydamak Rebellion in 1768 (cf. p. xiii above).

50, 335-6. The editors of the Academy edition of Shevchenko's works attribute these lines to the Second Crow.

349. *Tyasmyn*: a right tributary of the Dnieper.

351-2. *Mountain over Chyhyryn*: the place of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky's residence (cf. also note 41, 2). Chyhyryn is situated on the Tyasmyn.

363. *Lyman*: see note 11, 41.

52, 424. The song meant here is apparently "The Moldavian Raid", a historical folk-ballad (*duma*) of which several variants have been recorded. It is based on the exploits of Timothy Khmel'nyts'ky (died in 1653), Bohdan's elder son, in Moldavia in 1652-3. (For an English version and historical background see G. Nandris, *The Relations between Moldavia and Ukraine according to Ukrainian Folklore*, London, 1958, pp. 12-16; first published in French in *Mélanges de l'École Roumaine en France*, Paris-Bucarest, 1924, in English in *The Ukrainian Review*, V, 1, London, 1958.)

425. Bohdan's victory over the Poles in 1648 on the Zhovti Vody (Yellow Waters), a tributary of the Inhulets', is also mentioned in the above *duma* (note 52, 424) as well as in others.

426. *Berestechko*: a town 60 miles N.E. of L'viv, the scene of a tragic battle in 1651 in which Bohdan's forces were heavily defeated by the superior numbers of the Polish armies.

54, 473-5. In Shevchenko's times, serfs unwanted by their masters could be arbitrarily sent into the Russian army, usually for twenty-five years. It was also a punitive measure, since army life was both very hard and degrading. Such also was Shevchenko's punishment from the Third Department two years later.

#### 55. THE SERVANT-GIRL.

F.p. 1857. E.t. Hunter.

56, 40. *Danube*: see note 2, 66.

42-55. Based on a Ukrainian folk-song.

57, 101. Identical line with 90, 19.

58, 144. *Horodyshe*: a small town, 90 miles S.S.E. of Kiev.

64, 374. *Katrya*: diminutive of Kateryna.

66, 438-9. The anachronism (cf. 64, 384) may be intentional.

67, 510. *Katrusya*: another diminutive of Kateryna.

#### 69. THE CAUCASUS.

F.p. in Leipzig 1859; in Russia in full 1907. Severely cut in 1911-14 (70, 38-56, 71, 97-101, 73, 156-60); banned from the 1912 popular edition. E.t. Hunter, Manning, Weir.

Dedicated to Count Yakiv de Balmen (Jaques de Balmaine) (1813-45), an officer and amateur artist, Shevchenko's friend; Ukrainian of French descent. He and M. Bashilov prepared in 1844 a manuscript volume of Shevchenko's poems transliterated in Latin characters and illustrated with their drawings. "The Caucasus" was written under the impact of the news of de Balmen's death on a Caucasian battlefield (cf. 73, 156-179).

The Russian conquest of the Caucasus, which took some fifty years, was in the main completed only in 1859, after a long and heroic resistance by the Caucasian peoples.

69, 23. *With blood and sweat and tears*: the closest possible equivalent of the original line *Krovavym potom i sl'ozamy*. The resemblance to the famous Churchillian phrase is only coincidental.

70, 43-4. The number of casualties reached half a million.

65. "Bannock" and "croft" for *churek* and *saklya* were kindly suggested (in 1955, to the present editor) by the late Professor W. K. Matthews (cf. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 34, No. 82, London, 1955, p. 80).

74. TO MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN . . .  
F.p. in Leipzig 1859; in Russia in full 1907. E.t. Hunter, Manning.  
75, 57. Cf. a similar line 22, 53.
- 76, 113. *Jan Kollár* (1793-1852): a prominent Slovak-born Czech poet and scholar.
115. *Paul Joseph Safarik* (1795-1861): a famous Czech scholar. *Václav Hanka* (1791-1861): a Czech poet and scholar.
- 78, 170. *Brotherhood*: the Zaporozhian Sich community (cf. note 16, 31-2).
173. *Sinope, Trebizond*: towns in N.E. Turkey on the Black Sea; objects of raids by the Zaporozhian Cossacks.
- 176-7. See note 48, 289-90.
81. THE COLD RAVINE.  
F.p. in Leipzig 1859; in Russia in full 1907. In the 1911-14 editions, the lines 82, 41-52 were cut, and the whole poem was banned in the 1912 popular edition.
- 81, 14-16. *Motryn monastery*: in the forests of the Chyhyryn district. *The Cold Ravine* (Kholodnyy Yar): in the same forests. It was there that Zaliznyak assembled his haydamaks in 1768 and started his rebellion; in Uman' (120 miles S. of Kiev), he was joined by Gonta (see note 49, 319).
- 82, 43. *Nero*: Nicholas I.
46. Cf. "The Caucasus", 69ff., and particularly 71ff.
- 57-9. The view of a contemporary Russian historian, A. Skal'kovsky (*Nayezdy gaydamak na Zapadnuyu Ukrainu, v XVIII stoletii. 1733-1768*, Odessa, 1845, pp. 135, 141).
83. TO LITTLE MARYANA.  
F.p. 1906.
84. DAYS ARE PASSING . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Voynich, Hunter, Weir.
85. TESTAMENT.  
F.p. in Leipzig 1859; in Russia in full 1907. Lines 9-24 banned in the 1912 popular edition. E.t. Voynich, Selver, Hunter, Ewach, Lindsay, Manning, Giffey, Weir, and others.
86. IT DOES NOT TOUCH ME . . .  
F.p. in L'viv 1863. E.t. Voynich, Manning.
87. THE THREE PATHWAYS.  
F.p. 1861.  
This poem abounds in motifs taken from Ukrainian folk-songs.
88. EVENING.  
F.p. 1859. E.t. Ewach, Lindsay, Giffey.  
This poem has been set to music and has become a popular folk-song.
88. SHALL WE EVER MEET AGAIN?  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Manning.
- 88, XII, lff. Addressed to Shevchenko's fellow-members of the Brotherhood of Cyril and Methodius.
- 5-6. It seems most likely (as suggested by V. Shchurat) that the "mother" is misfortune, evil fate.
89. N.N. (THE SUN SETS . . .)  
F.p. 1867. E.t. Hunter, Manning.
89. N.N. (MY THIRTEENTH YEAR . . .)  
F.p. 1867. E.t. Manning, Weir.
- 90, 30. This girl is generally supposed to have been Oksana Kovalenko (cf. p. xv above).
91. DROWSY WAVES . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Selver, Ewach.

91. NOT FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR GLORY . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. (free adaptation) Livesay.
92. PLAINTIVELY THE CUCKOO CALLED . . .  
F.p. 1862.  
92, 1-3. *Cuckoo—girl*: a typical parallelism in Ukrainian folk-songs.
93. THIS IS NOT A LOFTY POPLAR . . .  
F.p. 1867.
93. BOTH THE VALLEY STRETCHING WIDE . . .  
F.p. 1860.
94. ONCE MORE THE POST . . .  
F.p. 1867.  
94, 19. In 1848, a cholera epidemic raged in Russia.
95. A LITTLE CLOUD SWIMS TO THE SUN . . .  
F.p. 1861.
95. BLAZE OF LIGHTS AND MUSIC CALLING . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Selver, Ewach, Weir.
96. THE NEOPHYTES.  
F.p. 1862.  
The subtitle "A Poem" (Ukr. *poema*) is to be taken in the meaning of "a narrative poem" or "a tale".  
Dedicated to his friend, the famous actor M. S. Shchepkin (1788-1863), who was regarded by Shevchenko as a Ukrainian (as can be seen from their extant correspondence). The seventy-year-old Shchepkin came from Moscow to Nizhniy Novgorod to see Shevchenko shortly after the latter's release from exile on 24 December 1857, and they spent that Christmas together. The poem was written in four days (5-8 December 1857); the dedication (96, 1-16) was written also some time before 24 December (cf. 96, 2).
- 96, 17. *Captivity*: here an allusion to the restrictions still imposed upon Shevchenko after his release from exile; while in Nizhniy Novgorod, he was still under police surveillance and was not allowed to travel to the capitals.
- 97, 64. *Dwine* ("a fine though half-forgotten word": *Spectator*, 21 December 1889): to waste or pine away; to languish.
- 99, 120. *Alcides*: the cognomen of Hercules.
- 100, 170. *Cyprian*: a native of Cyprus; here, Aphrodite (Venus).
- 101, 210-11. *Scythia* (situated roughly on the territory of the present-day Ukraine) was a place of banishment in the Roman Empire, like Siberia in the Russian Empire.
- 107, 446. *Scipian*, or Scipionic: appertaining to the Scipios (a renowned Roman family).
- 110, 548. Some manuscript copies (not in Shevchenko's own hand) and editions have a footnote, attributable to Shevchenko, describing Morok as "The Scandinavian Pluto". In one copy, "Scand[inavian]" is corrected to "Scythian".
111. OAK-GROVE, DARKLY-SHADOWED SPINNEY . . .  
F.p. 1867. E.t. Lindsay.  
This poem is based on a Ukrainian folk-song.
111. DAY COMES AND GOES . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Manning (p. 61).
112. ONCE I WAS WALKING IN THE NIGHT . . .  
F.p. 1876.  
112, 11-13. Cf. 70, 54.  
20. *Apostle's Gate*: St. Peter's Gate (*Petrovskiye vorota*), a triumphal arch leading into the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul (cf. note 35, 395).
113. SHOULD WE NOT THEN CEASE . . .  
F.p. 1861. E.t. Manning.  
Shevchenko's last poem.

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The arrangement within each section is chronological.

V.S.

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The present selection from Shevchenko's poetry, rendered into English verse by Vera Rich, contains thirty-eight poems, including a number of his most important works.

Paul Selver, the doyen of English translators of Shevchenko and a poet in his own right, says in his Preface: "I have read with pleasure and deep admiration Vera Rich's renderings of Shevchenko's poems. Her achievement is, both from an intellectual and an artistic point of view, of a very high order. When her translations appear in volume form they will no doubt receive favourable notices, but full justice can be done to them only by those critics who are familiar with the originals. They alone will appreciate to the full the remarkable skill with which the subtleties of Shevchenko's Ukrainian diction have been reproduced in English. How difficult a task this must have been, can be inferred from the masterly analysis of Shevchenko's poetical style which the late Professor W. K. Matthews provided in the essay with which this volume opens."

1-00

COLLECTED WORKS OF TARAS SHEVCHENKO  
IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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The Works of Taras Shevchenko are being published in English translation under the auspices of the Shevchenko Centenary Committee in Great Britain. The whole edition will comprise three volumes, each to be in several parts, in accordance with the following plan :

VOLUME ONE : POETRY

Part 1 : *Song out of Darkness*, thirty-eight poems selected and translated by Vera Rich.

Further parts will include the remaining 188 titles.

VOLUME TWO : PROSE

Part 1 : *The Artist* (Autobiographical Novel), translated by Paul Selver, to be published in 1962.

Further parts will include all other prose works.

VOLUME THREE : DRAMA ; DIARY ; CORRESPONDENCE.

SHEVCHENKO CENTENARY COMMITTEE

49 Linden Gardens, London, W.2