Іван Франко

IVAN FRANKO

The Poet of Western Ukraine

SELECTED POEMS

Translated with a biographical Introduction

by

PERCIVAL CUNDY

Edited by

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PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY

NEW YORK

Printed in the U. S. A. by
F. Hubner & Co., Inc., New York, N. Y.

PERCIVAL CUNDY

IN THE DEATH of the Rev. Percival Cundy, all Ukrainians and friends of Ukrainian culture felt a deep and personal loss. Dr. Cundy was one of those quiet and unassuming gentlemen who in their modest way work for international friendship and understanding and who by their sincerity and industry leave a deep mark upon all with whom they come into contact.

Dr. Cundy was born in Manchester, England, in 1881. As a boy he was brought to Canada and received his education in the University of Manitoba. Then as a Presbyterian minister and travelling superintendent for religious and educational work among the New Canadians, to use his official title, he travelled extensively through the prairie provinces. This brought him into those regions which were being settled by the Ukrainians, largely from Western Ukraine, and he came to know them, to appreciate them and to understand their culture, their hopes, and their difficulties.

When he commenced his work, he found among these new immigrants much of the same confusion with which Ivan Franko had had to contend. They were entered on the records as Galicians, Ruthenians, Austrians and Russians. During the ensuing years, the consciousness of their unity developed so that they became fully aware that they were Ukrainians and underwent the same transformation as their relatives in Europe.

This made a great impression upon Dr. Cundy. He

early learned their language and began to publish scattered translations of their poems. Of all the authors, Franko made the greatest impression upon him because of his intellect, his humanitarian interests, and his steady perseverance in his task as national leader, even under hardships and difficulties. He felt a natural and spiritual kinship with Franko and used him as the key to all his studies.

In 1937, Dr. Cundy came to the United States and lived in West Collingswood, New Jersey, where he planned an extensive program of translations of the Ukrainian masterpieces, so as to familiarize the English-speaking world with the achievements of Ukrainian literature. The completion of this program was cut short by his sudden death in 1947.

This volume of translations from Franko was the first which he had projected. It includes most of the masterpieces of the poet done in a sympathetic spirit and in a way that we may be sure Franko would have welcomed. We can only hope that it may meet the success which Dr. Cundy hoped for and that it may do its part in making Franko known and appreciated and in perpetuating the memory of Dr. Cundy as a scholar, a poet, and an apostle of international understanding.

* * *

PREFACE

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Ivan Franko was the voice of Western Ukraine, of those millions of Ukrainians who, by the stroke of political fate, were living under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They numbered about one tenth of the total number of Ukrainians in the world and during his lifetime, Franko saw them change from a mute and lethargic peasant element interested in their own personal affairs to an active and political unit which within two years of his death was prepared under the stress of World War I to declare for self-determination, to establish the Republic of Western Ukraine and to merge its fate voluntarily with their brothers of Great Ukraine in the Ukrainian National Republic.

He not only was the spokesman for his people. He played an overwhelming role in preparing them for their future. It was Franko who nursed the newly rekindled flame of Ukrainian consciousness and found for it the proper nourishment.

Yet there was nothing in his career that would lead the casual observer to appreciate his work. Even to many of his contemporaries, Ivan Franko was only a provincial journalist working hard in the city of Lviv for his daily bread. His life seemed a chapter of disillusionments, if not of failures. He had received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Vienna in the hope of becoming a professor of Ukrainian literature (or even Ruthenian, to use the official word of the Dual Monarchy). He received the appointment but the Polish Governor General of the province cancelled it. He had been

a candidate for election to the Galician Diet. He was counted out by political chicanery. He was roundly abused by many of those whom he sought to aid.

He knew his moments and hours of discouragement, but he worked on. In his inner self, he knew that he was defending a right cause and to his conscience and his sense of obligation he was ever true. He used his pen as his weapon. As poet, novelist, dramatist, literary critic, scholar, political pamphleteer, and in many another way he worked steadily and unflinchingly for the good of his people.

In 1913, all of Ukraine celebrated his fortieth anniversary as a writer. The magnitude and ardor of the demonstration proved conclusively that the population not only of Western Ukraine but of Great Ukraine and the Ukrainians in widely scattered parts of the world were paying him the silent tribute of moving along the path which he had outlined for them.

Yet there was a natural reason for the slow recognition which he received. The proud and haughty Leader, whether established by hereditary descent or by the physical force of his personal followers or by the machination of his brain, can compel his obedient and grateful slaves to echo his praises with the full knowledge that those praises will be paid in equal or greater measure to the man who can dethrone him.

Ivan Franko was a private citizen, a hard working writer and journalist, who was trying to lead people like himself to a knowledge of the truth and right. He had to persuade, he could not command. That put upon him

the great task of the democratic leader as he has been developed by centuries of civilization and a great obligation. The leader who bows to the masses becomes himself their servant in the bad sense of the word. The leader who with his clearer vision demands more of the masses than they are ready to give at the moment, who taxes them beyond their physical, intellectual and moral strength is repudiated by them and perhaps may be vindicated by later generations. The democratic leader who succeeds is the one who holds out forever an ideal just a little beyond the momentary feeling of his followers but never loses contact with their thoughts and emotions.

It is a soul-crushing task that is thus imposed upon a man who would lead his people to a higher scale of living, a more abundant life and he cannot fail to have moments of hesitation as to whether he has put forward impossible demands or has been false to his own vision. That was the burden of Ivan Franko, as he laid aside again and again his hopes of a more successful personal life in one of those fields that allured him only to continue the dull and monotonous routine that alone could lead to the promised land.

It is from this point of view that we must judge all his writings. It is from this point of view that we can compare him with Shevchenko and Lesya Ukrainka. Shevchenko was a genius who grasped the problem of Ukraine and poured it forth with his first recorded poems. Lesya Ukrainka was an invalid with a mind and soul of steel.

Franko was of ordinary clay. A boy with a keen mind

and a patched coat, he seemed ill at ease in the gymnasium—but he had the determination to study and to work for his people and their ideals.

He cannot be judged by his early poems, for he learned by life and practice what Western Ukraine needed and had to have and he supplied what was lacking. It was only after years of work that he could strike out boldly, for he was dependent on his writings for his daily bread. Yet by 1880, when he was twenty-four years old, he could write the *Hymn instead of a Prologue* on the eternal spirit of man and use it in his poems as a prologue, because he never outgrew his faith in the underlying strength and vitality of the average peasant as the basis of his hopes for a revival of his people.

This faith was instinctive in him and its expression runs through all of his published work. It appeared in many different forms. We see it in the romantic setting of his novel *Zakhar Berkut* which is merely an affirmation of the confidence that the peasant, the tiller of the soil, the man who knows every foot of land for five miles around and can trust his neighbor in a crisis can be secure against alien force and alien ideologies. Tuhar the Wolf may sell his soul to the Tatars in a vain attempt to overthrow the democratic liberties of the village but the peasants united as one man under the wise and democratic leadership of their chosen leader can unloose a flood that sweeps away all of his traitorous hopes.

We see the same faith in his poems as *The Pioneers* where he calls on his fellows to work, even at the cost of their own lives, for a better future, to build a road on

which mankind can advance and he reechoes that same call from the heights of years of experience in *The Conquistadores* at the very end of his life. Decades had passed and Franko had grown wiser. He had come more fully to appreciate the difficulties in his path but he had not been disillusioned.

He might well have been, for he knew only too well how great a task it was to inspire in the average village of Western Ukraine, after its years of apathy and oppression, that attitude of thought and work and confidence that was necessary. He shows the difficulties in his novel *Tangled Paths,* where the distrust of the villagers not only for their lord but for each other breaks the heart of the young lawyer who tries to serve them. He shows it in the willingness of the Israelites in *Moses* to turn away from their leader. But all this was no excuse for him to turn from his path.

He knew the population of his native region. He measured the province on foot and for the first time he portrayed in the literature of Western Ukraine all the classes, races, and peoples of the region. He came to realize that with the introduction of factories and the growth of industry, there was coming a deep change in the life of the people, but he also saw that that change was not necessarily for the better, as so many carelessly thought. It was producing new problems, new abuses, which might after all be harder to eliminate and solve than had been the defects of the past. Yet there was only one remedy for the new as there had been for the old, the development of the human personality to an appreciation of its

own powers and its obligations to its fellow men.

In making this discovery and in acting upon it, Franko was not a self-taught genius. He was poor but his parents and his stepfather had been able to give him the best education possible for the average Ukrainian of the west. He had passed with credit through the gymnasium. He had studied at the Universities of Lviv and Vienna and he was well aware of all the trends of thought that were developing in the Austro-Hungarian capital.

He knew Ukrainian literature thoroughly, the literature of the revival, the work of Kotlyarevsky, Shevchenko, Vovchok, and many others. He knew the writers of Great Ukraine personally, for many of them had come to Lviv for the publication of their works. He knew also with equal thoroughness the writers of the past. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on Ivan Vyshensky, one of the great figures of the late sixteenth century, and his lectures and his articles gave to an astonished people a new glimpse of their past with its highlights and shadows.

Perhaps most important of all was his friendship with Michael Drahomaniv, the greatest Ukrainian scholar of the seventies and eighties who had left Great Ukraine to preach from abroad his convictions as to the need of Ukrainian unity and his ideals as to the role that Ukraine could and must play in the development of Europe. He was no slavish follower of his master but he gratefully acknowledged his enormous debt to a man who more than any other had steered his young footsteps through the tangled maze of the party squabbles in his early years.

So far we have spoken chiefly of Franko's relations

with his people. His education had made him aware of the outside world, even though he had traveled relatively little. He knew Latin, German, and Polish. He had studied in German and Polish schools. Later he gained a command of English and of French. With this broad basis he translated for his people the masterpieces of modern European literature. He explained them to his readers and he drew from them for himself their underlying significance in the development of a free humanity.

The breadth of his reading and his observation explains the wide range of his literary interests. He knew how to profit by the advantages that were to be found in belonging to a great and multi-national empire, even as he realized and never faltered in pointing out the handicaps that that empire placed upon the development of the Ukrainians.

It is easy to understand why the youth of Western Ukraine read with enthusiasm his poems and his stories. In simple language they set forth those ideas which were the needs of the moment. They appealed to the best and most unselfish interests of the university students and the rising leaders in the villages and towns. They spoke of the simple things of life, of the contemporary scene and indicated their significance and meaning.

In line with this, it is to be noted that Franko, unlike Shevchenko, rarely indulged in pure narrative poetry. *The End of Serfdom* (*The Master's Jokes*) is almost the sole example of a major work in which the narrative element is predominant. Even here in the sympathetic

picture of the old priest, with his limited intellectual resources and his meagre opportunities for service, the reader can find an expression of the thoughts of Franko and his deep faith and trust in God and the power of righteousness, which were often attacked by the self-righteous who opposed his attempts to wipe away those abuses which time and tradition had allowed to grow even in the Church of his people.

Along with this go his lyric poems which like *Withered Leaves* lay bare the thoughts and feelings which swept over his soul. They form a notable collection, for they reveal Franko's innate spirit. They show how his sensitive soul reacted to the many currents of hope and of disappointment that came over him at various times. They make clear his appreciation of the beauties of Ukrainian nature and his understanding of the problems and perplexities of his fellow men.

Yet Franko undoubtedly reaches the heights in his philosophical poems, in *Cain,* in *Ivan Vyshensky,* and in *Moses.* These need not fear comparison with the great poems of other languages and literatures and belong truly to the literature of the world. In each of them there is a well told story with vivid imagery but there is more to them than that. Far more, for the kernel of the poem is not the mere external course of events which Franko describes but they are in a sense personal meditations on that strange conflict that goes on in the mind of a democratic leader, the need for communicating his ideas to the people around him and his equally compelling urge to follow his own course to the end, regardless of their

petty interference. Cain and Moses and Ivan Vyshensky all feel that they must have human companionship in their quest. Sooner or later that becomes overpowering but even then they cannot find that peace which they had sought. They cannot find it in solitude. They cannot find it in the unthinking masses. Hence the tragedy that confronts them.

It seemed insolvable to Franko but he won through the maze of doubts and difficulties. He regained his spiritual equilibrium and realized that in reality it was but another one of the sacrifices that man must make for his fellows. The despairing Moses, withdrawing from his people and even cursing Jehovah as a deceiver, cannot know that but a few days after his death, his follower Joshua will be able to speak the effective word and lead the people to the promised land. The last hours of Moses would have been very different, had he but known in time and appreciated that lesson that Franko had preached in *The Pioneers* so many years before.

In a real sense *Moses* was the culmination of the work of Franko. It marked his final acceptance of the fact that he would never accomplish all on which he had set his heart, to see his people free and happy. In this he won through all the doubts and difficulties that had been his and in his final collection, *Semper Tiro,* he summed up his life work with poems that reflected his serene consciousness that he had fought a good fight and had kept faith with his people, his ideals, and himself.

It is small wonder that a man of Franko's ability, industry and sincerity finally became the trusted leader and

guide of his people, that he was accepted as their spokesman, even though in later years he stayed aside from the constant party strife that went on around him. It was not from lack of interest or indifference. It was because he recognized that men of good will might differ in their choice of means to reach a goal. He did not care for the opinions of men of ill will. The goal was certain and more and more of the younger leaders were coming to agree upon that goal. It was his task to make it more definite, more clear, and he could do that much better by the policy which he was following.

There was nothing spectacular about the life and work of Ivan Franko. His was the monotonous hard-working career of a professional writer and journalist. He lived quietly and unostentatiously, doing the task of the moment and of the hour. Yet from his pen there came uninterruptedly the clarion call to action, to national regeneration, to national unity, to the consciousness of Ukraine's position in the world, and to the ideals and hopes of mankind.

Yet his poems are more than mere documents of a past era. The underlying truths which he preached to his fellow countrymen have a far wider application. This is especially true in these days when the iron curtain has descended more tightly over the heads of the Ukrainian people and when the entire world is menaced by the grim spectre of the betrayal of all human ideals, the deliberate distortion of noble sentiments and expressions and by the ruthless desire to reintroduce among men a new and more terrible slavery than the world has ever known.

Under the false guise of progress and of reason, a newer ignorance, a more unspeakable brutality is being let loose. At such a moment it is well to listen to the calm, clear, strong voice of Ivan Franko, still proclaiming as in the past that mankind must not be led astray in its search for a better world and that the new world will make its appearance in proportion as men everywhere live with a consciousness of their duties and their obligations to themselves and their fellow men. May his lesson be heard and followed!

Clarence A. Manning

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Chapter I

THE TIMES AND THE MAN

DURING THE LAST three decades of the nineteenth century, there was a great revival of Ukrainian life and culture in the province of Galicia, Western Ukraine, which was then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In Great Ukraine, then a part of Russia, dominated by the absolutist Tsarist regime, the Ukrainian people had seen their language and national aspirations strangled, but at an opportune moment, new life and cultural aspirations emerged again in that part of Ukraine which had been separated from the larger entity for long centuries. From early times the smaller portion had been a field of contention between Poles, Muscovites, and Ukrainians, but from 1382 to 1772 it remained under the sway of the Polish state. The Ukrainian inhabitants called their country Rus and themselves Rusins and were designated officially by the name 'Ruthenian' as the name Ukraine with its ancient associations was taboo to both Pole and Austrian alike. At the time of the first partition of Poland, the province fell to Austria. In the west the population is predominantly Polish, in the east it is overwhelmingly Ukrainian. Historically, the Poles were the seigneurial class, the landed aristocracy, the exploiters and oppressors of the Ukrainian peasantry whom they

held in bondage as long as they could. Generally speaking, the Polish aristocracy enjoyed the favor of the Austrian government, although it had a long history of restiveness behind it. The officials and the bureaucracy at Vienna, however, were accustomed to employ methods based on the maxim *divide et impera* in governing their patchwork empire with its many mutually hostile elements and its six official languages. As a result, the government at Vienna would occasionally grant the Ukrainians a trifling concession to win a cheap gratitude and keep the peasants subservient and thus maintain an uneasy balance.

The then prevailing ideal of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie was that the greatest good fortune for a 'Ruthenian' was to get through the university and then "to cling with both hands to the imperial doorlatch until one became an imperial official with secure prospects of position, promotion and pension, and to live out one's life under the aegis of the Austrian Empire, which however, actually gave us nothing, and did not even promise us anything." Yet the Ukrainian community at the time was split into two warring parties, Muscophiles and Nationalists. The burning question was whether the Ukrainians of Galicia ought to consider themselves as belonging to one of the supposedly three component 'tribes' of the mighty Russian people, or whether they, together with the so-called Little Russians of Great Ukraine in southern Russia, constituted a nation different in language, culture, and history, from the Muscovites of Russia proper. The older generation liked to feel that they

could rely on Russian support and influence and naturally they leaned strongly towards Russian culture. They objected to any efforts to develop the 'Ruthenian dialect' as a literary medium. Why try to refine a peasant tongue into an instrument for literary and scientific use when the highly developed Russian language was already at their disposal? They quite overlooked the fact, of course, that Russian was at one time merely the local dialect as spoken around Moscow. On the other hand, the younger generation felt themselves 'Nationalists' in the sense that they recognized in themselves distinct differences in heritage and culture. Some of them dreamed of restoring a separate Ukrainian nation based on the Kozak traditions of republicanism with its seat perhaps at Kiev. Others aimed merely to develop and maintain their separate identity without any very clear ideas as to the place the nation should occupy. However, they confined their patriotism chiefly to a wordy warfare with their opponents on inconsequential details.

This warfare consisted in heated debates over language, vocabulary, literary models, and which of several competing alphabetic systems was to be used in writing. There were also disputes in the realm of religion as far as ritual was concerned: bells, kneeling in worship, use of organs, and the like. All these miserable disputes eventually percolated down among the masses, bowed beneath the burden of economic bondage and unenlightened ignorance, and dissipated their native strength, leaving them indifferent to any higher aspirations than the struggle for daily bread. "Both parties," wrote Franko in his

autobiography, "Muscophile as well as Nationalist, were purely doctrinaire; there was even a tacit understanding between the two not to talk about their differences before the common people, but to keep the masses in complete ignorance in regard to these questions. When any of them had to make a public appearance before the people, and this occured very rarely, usually before elections, and then in the vicinity of a church or in a tavern—the two cardinal points they stressed were: we are all Rusins and we ought to stick together, and we, above all others, ought to thank the emperor for his immense benevolence towards us and to petition him for such and such. But none of them ever tried to make clear to the people the first principles of constitutional government, or spoke a word about the fundamentals of economics or socialism. As late as 1880 the entire mass of our people lived under the conviction that the emperor possessed autocratic power in the state, that he alone could act, and that all things depended on his will. . . . That was the time in Galicia when it seemed that the average Rusin, disheartened by these squabbles about nationality, Shevchenko, language, and Drahomaniv's ideas, washed his hands of the whole business and wanted to know nothing beyond the black and yellow boundary posts which divided Galicia from Russia." This was the state of things among his people into which Franko came and which he was destined radically to change by his life and activity.

Yet a new spirit was at work, and about the '70's it began to manifest itself in initiating the mighty change which came over the whole Ukrainian community in Gali-

cia during the next three decades. Speaking in 1898, on the occasion of the celebration of Ivan Franko's twenty-five years of literary activity, Professor Hrushevsky, Ukraine's greatest historian, said: "The last three decades may be called the heroic period of Ukrainian national, cultural, and progressive ideas. Heroic, I say, however difficult it may be to connect the idea of heroism with the record of our misfortunes, the eternal repetitions of pusillanimity, hypocrisy, and betrayals. Certainly, at times it requires no less heroism to fight against such things than to fight against an armed foe. Let me point out that among the exploits of Hercules, the cleansing of the Augean stables is recorded with the same glory attached as his descent into Hades." It is quite probable that in this last sentence, Professor Hrushevsky had in mind the closing line of Franko's fine sonnet, dated September 24, 1889, which the reader will find in this volume among the selections from *Prison Sonnets.*

The principal hero who helped to bring about this change in his fellow-countrymen was Ivan Franko. In his essay on the *Hero as Poet,* Carlyle says: "The poet who could merely sit on a chair and make stanzas would never make a stanza worth much. He could not sing the Heroic Warrior unless he himself were a Heroic Warrior too. I fancy there is in him the Politician, the Thinker, Legislator, Philosopher. In one or the other degree, he could have been, he is, all of these." The quotation is particularly apposite in characterizing Franko, whose life and work made a permanent impress on his own people such as few have accomplished with the means at his disposal

and the methods he was compelled to use. "The historian of the future will not hesitate to designate him as the focus of his people's spiritual life and the efficient factor of the great cultural revival among the Galician Ukrainians at the turn of the last and the present centuries." At every step in every field of endeavor, one comes across his immediate activity, or at least, his great influence. "His greatest significance is seen in the development of our political and social life—in that field, as it were, he shook the former foundations of our social order, laid new foundations and began to pave a new highway for future progress. Most of all, he was so far fortunate as to see the results of his work realized in our midst in his own lifetime." (Krushelnytsky)

To an eminent degree, Franko possessed the versatility and manysidedness demanded of a leader in public life. He was one of the founders of the first Ukrainian political party in Galicia to emerge with a program demanding social changes and the uplift of the masses. Before this he had championed the cause of the common man and had suffered for his devotion by imprisonment on false charges or on no charges at all. In his work with the pen he did not limit his interest to any particular field of literature. With Terence he could have said: "I am a man and nothing that concerns man is alien to me." A writer by profession, he had to gain his daily bread by the drudgery of journalism, but his fame rests on the varied contributions he made in almost every branch of literature: the novel, short story, drama, and poetry, as well as science. He was a great scholar, writing some of

the best criticism in the language, judging with insight and acumen, encouraging budding talent, bringing worthwhile works to public notice, condemning the meretricious and unprofitable, striving to develop and increase a better taste and appreciation among his readers, cultivating among younger writers a higher standard of writing and expression. He published his own translations and re-issued those made by others of the best in European literatures in order to widen his people's horizons. He wrote good books for children and issued versions for the young of the classics of general literature. And he accomplished all this under the burdens and cares of everyday life and amidst the hostility of a community which resented being stirred from its age-long routine and inertia.

When we survey such a wide range of activity in all its breath and variety, and especially when we look at his literary work as a whole, the question naturally arises; in which branch did he most excel? Wherein lies his chief and enduring contribution to the national life? Expressing the general consensus of opinion among Ukrainian literary critics today, Krushelnytsky says: "To a certain degree of unanimity and assurance it is possible to give an answer even now, and it is, that notwithstanding his novels, short stories, dramas, critical, historical and scientific works, Franko achieved most in the field of poetry, and therefore in assessing his significance, we must give first place to his poetry as marking him as a spiritual leader, teacher, and inspirer of his contemporaries." As a poet-prophet, Franko could justly speak of himself in

the same words he puts into the mouth of Moses in his greatest poem, where the old leader, speaking of his relationship to the Hebrews, says:

"As thou shalt through the centuries march,
Thou'lt bear my spirit's stamp on thee."

Before relating Franko's external life-story and then passing to a study of his poetry as the expression of his inner life, it is well to point out in advance some of the outstanding characteristics of the man. If these traits are kept in mind we shall get a better understanding of his total impact on his times and on his people. Three main features are prominent: his indefatigable industry, his social consciousness and sense of mission, and the undaunted courage he displayed all through his life. These, together with the circumstances of his life, are all reflected in his poetry, and can be traced in his struggles and development.

In regard to his unflagging industry, one incident will suffice to characterize the whole. A young man, then a first year student at the University of Lviv, records his first meeting with Franko in 1889. "When I called on Franko for the first time at his home, he was sitting at the table writing. Standing at the threshold, I greeted him with the words 'Good day!' and stepped forward a little way into the room. However he did not return my greeting, merely glanced at me absent-mindedly and went on with his writing. I remained standing a while and waited for him to reply. But he did not do so and continued his writing without a break until he finished, folded his

papers and looked up. He then immediately asked me what I wished and very willingly gave me the information I desired. It was clear that the most important thing for him was work, literary work, to which he devoted all his time and all his strength, without regard to circumstances or environment. Later, visiting Franko frequently at his home, I found him many a time busy with his literary work with children playing and crying around him, in the midst of the disorder caused by the household activity going on all around him. It was manifest that he was a man of strong nerves."

"The most important thing for him was work!" Whatever his circumstances, Franko never paused in his work. Whether in prison, on vacation in the summer months, or in the midst of desperate and paralyzing sickness, he never ceased to labor. It was as though some demon of industry were always urging him on. He was the living embodiment of his own lines in the sonnet called *Work*:

"In work alone can man's strength be unfurled,
'Tis work alone that doth create a world;
Naught else hath worth, for work keeps man alive."

The preponderant mass of Franko's poems up to 1890, and even later in part, deal with social problems. In them his social consciousness and sense of mission are expressed with force and passion. The early poem *The Pioneers,* a sort of program declaration, is characterized by his prevailing humanitarianism, sense of solidarity with the depressed masses, and a sacrificial desire to help them to a better future. His deep sympathy with the op-

pressed, his indignation at the tyrant and the exploiter is one of his strongest notes; it is implicit, even when not expressed, in all of his poetry except his love lyrics and his philosophical poems, and the latter are ethical rather than speculative. He was motivated by a sense of duty and obligation to his fellow Rusins, which to him was the essence of national patriotism. He felt his patriotism not as a mere sentiment, or a cause for natural pride, but as "a mighty yoke which fate had laid on his shoulders." This sense of duty and obligation to his people in some measure accounts for his sense of social solidarity and responsibility to make his gifts count in the service of his fellow-countrymen. Like the prophet Jeremiah, with whom he has some psychological affinities, the word 'burned within him,' and he could not help but give it voice, though, like Jeremiah, it cost him much in persecution and misunderstanding.

The endowment of courage is revealed only when it is put to the test, and Franko's endowment of moral and spiritual courage was put to the fullest proof by poverty, obloquy, and persecution. He endured the hard test of struggling with scanty means and financial limitations all his life. During his university years, a junior student, calling on him shortly after his first imprisonment on the false charge of subversive political activity, entered his room and was horrified to find him standing by the fireless stove eating a piece of dry bread for his meal. In after years the student wrote: "This made a very disagreeable impression on me, for I, like others in our circle, already saw in Franko the makings of a great man,

one who deserved a better support and means of living than the common run of students." Franko manfully bore unjust obloquy and ostracism. After his first imprisonment, his heart was wrung to discover that people treated him as a social leper because he had been in prison, although altogether unjustly. Another young man, who later became a strong supporter of Franko, came to Lviv in 1877 to serve his term in the Army as a one-year volunteer. He knew nothing of what had been going on in the university, but one evening, feeling very lonely, he paid the fee to go to a students' soirée. He says: "I went in among strangers and being very provincial, I felt embarrassed and soon prepared to leave. A certain Zanklynsky, whom I had not known up to this time, barred my way and pulling out a sheet of paper, said: 'Give a trifle to help poor Franko. He's come out of jail with hardly a shirt to his back.' I gave him my last few cents and said: 'Why don't you go around the people in the hall? They'll surely give you something.' 'What do you mean?' replied Zanklynsky, 'If I did so, they'd throw me out. Don't you know they all look on Franko as though he were the devil himself?' " The word went around that, besides being a wicked socialist, Franko was also an atheist; furthermore, it was darkly hinted that he was living in immoral relations with the sister of his friend Pavlyk, with whom he lodged. In later years when he became more widely known, we are told on first-hand authority, that in one village at least, under the denunciations of the ignorant local priest, the peasant women had formed in their minds such a picture of Franko that

in scolding their disobedient children, they were accustomed to use the worst expletive they knew, which was: 'You nasty little Franko!' Friends did not always stand by him, as illustrated by the lines in which Franko, speaking of what life had given him, says:

> "It gave me friends who yet were prone
> First their own interest to see."

His courage was tested by many a disappointment, the greatest of which was, perhaps, the failure to receive the chair of Ukrainian Literature in the university, to which he had been elected on his merits, but which he never occupied, due to the act of the Polish governor of the province. Yet this courage so often tried and tested never forsook him, and it finally had its reward in the general esteem he won from all classes in the community before the evening of his life.

The principal values of Franko's poetry lie in its vital content, a fullness of life which embraces every sphere of his people's existence. Most of all, its significance is found in the enthusiasm it evoked among his younger contemporaries, whom it inflamed with zeal and ardor to strive for a better and brighter future. The poet in Franko made him the pioneer of progress in Galician Ukraine; the poet became a teacher of patriotism —not a patriotism of mere words, but a patriotism profoundly based on a comprehension of the life of the people and expressed in work in the interest of the people; the poet was the magnet that drew together the best and most cultured minds of the society of his time. Franko belonged to that class of writers who take an immediate

and active part in the life of the community, who nourish it with the spiritual food of their own ideals expressed in their literary works, and who strive to adapt themselves to the life in which they find themselves and to lift it to higher levels. After twenty-five years of literary activity, Franko thus expressed what his aim had been from the beginning: "I always attached the greatest importance to the attaining of common human rights, for I know that a people engaged in battling for these common human rights will by so doing also conquer national rights for itself. In all of my activity I have desired above all to be not so much a poet, a scholar, or a publicist, as to be a man."

The name of Franko inevitably invites a comparison with Shevchenko, Ukraine's other and undoubtedly greater national poet. Shevchenko was an artist and painter by profession, Franko was a working journalist, yet both made their greatest impact on their national life by their poetry. However, there are differences. Franko was a great writer, gifted with a great talent, diligently and strenuously cultivated, but, as most think, lacking the genius that dwelt in Shevchenko. In Franko's life there was none of the romantic that attaches to that of Shevchenko, who was born a serf, was largely self-educated, and who had the experience of being lifted up to the heights of social and intellectual intercourse in some of the most polished circles of Russian life, only to be plunged into a life of lonely exile in a penal battalion in the far-away Asia among the wild Kirghiz tribesmen. Franko, born of the better-class peasantry, or yeomanry,

as we might call it, was a well-educated man who passed through all the regular stages of educational advantage from boyhood to manhood and attained the highest degree of academic distinction by earning a doctorate at the Imperial University at Vienna. His life was a prosaic one of duty and drudgery done, day in and day out, except for the three occasions when he was arrested and imprisoned for the expression of his progressive ideals. He rarely travelled beyond the bounds of his native province, except for a couple of trips to Kiev and a few sojourns in Vienna. His days were spent in external regularity, writing, correcting, publishing, and promoting new ventures in the literary field. In his generation, Shevchenko was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, for the society in which he lived was not ripe enough to receive his ideas at the time, and only realized his greatness long after his death. Franko, on the other hand, lived to see the time when he could look with pride on some results of his labors, and to behold how a tiny bud, under the fertilizing influence of his thought, had grown and unfolded into a splendid flower of social solidarity and national consciousness. It was only the heavy blow of paralyzing sickness that prevented him from seeing a still greater fruitage of his labors among his fellow-countrymen. If, in his declining days, Franko was permitted to see results of his work such as Shevchenko was not fated to enjoy while still living, it was because of his widely spread social activity, exercised in one place over some forty years, which gave an opportunity for the ideas he preached to take root and develop among all strata of the community as a whole.

Chapter II

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLDAYS

IN THE YEAR 1856, when the Peace of Paris brought an end of the war of the Western Powers in Europe against Russian imperialistic strivings to dominate the Balkans, and when in America, 'bleeding Kansas' was a political battle-cry in the rising anti-slavery agitation and John Brown struck his first armed blow at Ossawatomie against the institution of Negro slavery, a child was born in Western Ukraine who was destined to lead in frustrating Russian attempts to strangle the Ukrainian language and national aspirations and to spur his people to shake off the bondage of economic and political tyranny.

The child was Ivan Franko, who was born, August 15, in the village of Nahuyevychi, Drohobych County, in the province of Galicia. His father was Jacob Franko, a fairly well-to-do peasant farmer and the local blacksmith. The elder Franko was of a German stock which had become Ukrainianized in the course of time. From this strain in his heredity it may be that Ivan derived the remarkable industry that characterized him all through his active and fruitful life. His mother came of a family of petty gentry, who lived among the peasantry on about the same economic level while still preserving some social differences. Only eight years prior to the birth of

Ivan Franko the Ukrainian peasants had been set free from the yoke of serfdom by the abolition of all feudal obligations in the Austrian Empire as a result of the revolutionary ferment which stirred all Europe in 1848. Ivan was the oldest of four children born to the Frankos, two other sons, Zakhar and Onufrey, and a daughter who died in childhood.

When the boy Ivan was six years old, his father sent him to a common school in the neighboring village of Yasenyts. Apparently there was no school in Nahuyevychi, but as his mother's brother lived in Yasenyts, the boy stayed with his uncle, Pavlo Kulchytsky, while attending school there. This uncle, a man above the peasant average, could both read and write and assisted his small nephew in the latter's studies. During these first two years of school, Ivan learned to read and write in Ukrainian, Polish and German, acquired a knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic and also learned how to read and chant the Old Slavonic liturgy used in the services of the Church.

At eight years of age, his father sent him still farther away to the German-speaking school conducted by the Basilian Fathers in Drohobych, the seat of the County administration. Jacob, however, did not live to see more than his son's first successes as a scholar, for he passed away the same year, 1865, just at Easter time. Though Ivan was so young at the time, he always preserved a faithful memory of his father. One of the first poems he wrote while still a school-boy, entitled *Easter* (Velykden), was dedicated to his father's memory, and his great

poem *The Passing of Serfdom* (Panski Zharty), written in 1887 just after his marriage, is also dedicated to the memory of Jacob Franko. Soon after his father's death, his mother, in order to save the farm which was heavily loaded with debts, married again. Franko's stepfather, Hryn Havrylyk, was a young bachelor from Yasenyts, who turned out to be a man of sterling character and personality, and whom Ivan held in the highest esteem all his life. With the help and encouragement of this good stepfather, young Franko finished the common school at Drohobych in 1868 and continued his education in the gymnasium there which was maintained by the community.

There is a fairly full picture of these boyhood years to be obtained from the many autobiographical passages in Franko's stories and sketches written at a later date. We can see him first as a "small, timid, insignificant-looking, backward boy, who was distinguished among his fellows by his shoes which were not cleaned for weeks at a time, his dirty shirt, torn coat and uncombed hair, and by the first place in class." It was the custom in those days in the common schools and in some gymnasiums to seat the pupils in the order of the progress they made and the marks they obtained for their work, and on leaving school the 'place' they had occupied in class was noted on their final diplomas by the teachers. All through his school career, both in common school as well as in gymnasium, Franko was never in less than third place, sometimes in second, but usually in the first.

It is from the same sources that we learn how he was

frequently harried by the other pupils because he "wasn't like everybody else"; how some of the bizarre pedagogues of the time abused their peasant pupils with impunity—all of which impregnated his sensitive soul with those germs of indignation, that contempt for and hatred of violence, out of which developed later his burning protests against oppression and tyranny of whatever sort. Then there were the impressions he received of domestic life: his father's blacksmith shop with its fire that was never extinguished, the carpenter bench which stood in the living room—pictures which remained forever imprinted in vivid colors on his receptive and impressionable mind; the slightest outrage or insult left a lasting brand on his soul, which neither years, nor experience, nor the petty cares of life ever succeeded in totally erasing. And all through these experiences there flowed the steady stream of daily study in school, tiresome for the boy, but helped out by a remarkable memory, so retentive that after listening to a history lesson a whole hour in length, he could repeat it almost word for word as he had heard the teacher deliver it. Sometimes he would have to sit on the punishment bench and there, unobserved by anyone else, he would pick holes in the plastered wall with his fingers.

There were also the impressions left on his mind from the life of the craftsmen and artisans with whom he came in contact. He remembered their particular songs, their stories and proverbial sayings and stock jokes. He recalled how he entered into their work, sang along with them, and how he once helped to paint a chest. And how,

when the school year was finished, he proudly took home an excellent certificate of progress. At home in the country, in the midst of nature, there was the peasant's and farmer's life with its unceasing toil and hand to hand contact with the mysterious forces of nature, and man's struggle to master them and utilize them for his own subsistence. He helped to herd the cattle, bring in the hay, harvest the wheat and the rye. In later life a friend records that he was fond of using witty, but blunt and forthright similes and proverbs drawn from the barnyard and the life of the farmer, remarks which sometimes shocked and repelled a fastidious and over-refined audience. The boy's imagination was abnormally sensitive and receptive to the impressions made upon it by the phenomena of nature; he revelled in its ever-changing beauties, he keenly observed its transient moods. All these made a deep and lasting impression on him, but chiefly it was nature in its more violent aspects and tempestuous manifestations which exercised the strongest influence on his mind. This is evidenced in many of his writings, such as, for example: the theme of his novel, *The Great Gale* (Velyky Shum) with its descriptions of tempestuous and destructive winds which one year blew over the land from Christmas till after Easter, and which forms the background of the entire novel. Again, in his long narrative poem, *The Passing of Serfdom,* a tremendous snowstorm in the forest on New Year's Day is powerfully described as the setting of one of the two main incidents in the poem. Other instances might be enumerated but these will suffice.

Ivan was twelve years old when he passed from the Basilian Fathers' school at Drohobych to the gymnasium there, where he studied until 1875 in preparation for the University of Lviv. Roughly speaking, the gymnasium corresponds to the American high school, except for the fact that it extended over a period of eight years and led directly to university matriculation. It was divided into two sections, four years each, called lower and upper gymnasium.

During the time he spent in lower gymnasium, Franko does not seem to have read as much or as widely as he did in upper gymnasium. Here, however, he began to read omnivorously and without discrimination. He read everything he could lay his hands on, foreign writers such as Schiller, Klopstock, Goethe, Heine, Mickiewicz, Sue, Hugo, Shakespeare, Dickens. He also began to collect a personal library consisting mainly of the above authors to begin with. At this time too, he became acquainted with the works of the best Ukrainian writers from beyond the border in Russia, such as Shevchenko, Kotlyarevsky, Vovchok, Kulish, Myrny and others. Of all these, it was the works of Shevchenko that made the deepest impression on him, so much so that he soon had the whole of the *Kobzar* by heart. Spurred by the example of two of his schoolfellows, Dmytro Vintskovsky his senior, and Sydir Pasichynsky, of about his own age, who both already enjoyed a certain local fame as poets, Franko began to follow in their steps. He tried his hand at composing verses and writing stories and sketches. He also collected and wrote down folk songs, which he

"loved to distraction." Before the end of his course in the gymnasium he had collected in two fat notebooks hundreds of them, mainly of the kind called *Kolomiyky*, a type of song sung to accompany the peasant dance of the same name.

Two of his teachers are particularly mentioned as having encouraged the youth in his essays at original composition. One was the Ukrainian, Ivan Verkhratsky, well known as an author of school manuals on natural science and philosophy and who also wrote poetry himself. The other was the Pole, Julian Turczynski, the teacher of Polish language and literature, who was, in addition, a writer of interesting stories, some of which touched on phases of Ukrainian life. It was through the former that Franko was introduced to Shevchenko's poetry. Franko records that on one occasion he handed in to Verkhratsky a required task which he had written in verse. "In accordance with his usual custom," writes Franko, "he did not criticize its content so much as the choice of words and the turns of speech used in expressing the ideas." Verkhratsky was evidently a teacher with insight enough to perceive that what his pupil needed first of all was to become a good craftsman in the use of his medium.

Practically all of Franko's work written while in gymnasium has been lost or was destroyed. He never had the slightest hesitation about destroying anything he wrote that did not seem to him to come up to standard. In later years a friend came on him while he was engaged in tearing up a manuscript he had just finished. The friend remonstrated against such wholesale destruction,

but Franko's reply was short and to the point: "This is rubbish!" We do know however, from what he tells us, that in the fifth class he wrote a versified history of Rome up to the time of Tullus Hostilius. In the sixth class, for the paper in Polish required by his teacher, he handed in a versified tragedy; for the German paper, a fragment of another drama in verse; for Okhrymovych, the teacher of Ukrainian, a narrative of village life. In the seventh class, he began to work on a historical poem in hexameters, the contents of which somewhat resembled the theme of his later prize-winning novel, *Zakhar Berkut.* In the eighth class he wrote a drama, which, after revision by M. Vahylevych, was staged and played by a student amateur dramatic society. This seems an extraordinary amount of work in three languages for a youth to accomplish while still maintaining a foremost place in his class work.

Before he left the gymnasium, Franko had the satisfaction of seeing himself in print. In 1873 he wrote two sonnets which find a place in his collected works. One of these, *Folk Song* (Narodnya Pisnya), he sent to the periodical, the *Friend* (Druh) published semi-monthly at Lviv by a student university society called the Academical Club, and in 1874, this, his first printed work, appeared in its pages.

While he was in the sixth class, Franko's mother died, thus leaving him bereaved of both parents, "a complete orphan," in the Ukrainian idiom. His stepfather soon remarried, but the new stepmother, if such she can be called, seeing that there was no legal qualification for it

whatever, caused no break in the cordial relations between Hryn Havrylyk and the stepson he had so loyally supported and encouraged. On completing the seventh class, Frank spent the summer vacation in making a rambling tour of part of his native province for the first time. He took the train (itself no small event in those days for a youth) from Drohobych to Striy, a seat of the lumber industry; from thence on foot he travelled to Synevidsko in the Boyko country, and then through a number of localities to Lolyn. We shall hear of Lolyn later in another connection. He returned to Drohobych and started off in the opposite direction as far as Volosyanko.

These summer vacation tours, in which he got an intimate acquaintance with the common people and with the local intelligentsia, doctors, priests, and lawyers, in many out-of-the-way corners of the country, played a very important part in Franko's subsequent life, and provided one of the means by which he aroused a desire for a thorough knowledge of their country and its people on the part of his younger contemporaries and thus quickened their national consciousness and patriotic solidarity. Later on, these student tours promoted by Franko, became a regular institution in Galicia and assumed such proportions that in due time the attention of the Polish authorities was attracted to them with the usual result: stupid and unreasonable police interference.

We get an interesting glimpse of Drohobych Gymnasium and of the young Franko himself during this time from the reminiscences of Antin Chaykivsky, the well-known novelist. In 1926 he wrote: "I attended the Pol-

ish-speaking gymnasium at Sambir from 1869 to 1877. (Sambir is some twenty miles north of Drohobych.) At that time Franko was a student at Drohobych. We students, and the faculty as well, had no very high opinion of Drohobych Gymnasium, for we felt ourselves vastly superior to the student body there. Sometimes one or another of our teachers would say to a boy who was having trouble making his grades: 'Why worry so much? Why don't you transfer over to Drohobych, you'll be sure to get excellent marks there for the same work you're doing here.'

"Shortly after I had passed into the fourth class, a Polish student who had just come to us from Drohobych told us that there was a student there who used to write his assignments in verse. His name was Ivan Franko, so he said. This interested me very much, for is there any greater ideal for a lad in the fourth class than to be a poet? Others among my fellow-students would not believe it at all, regarding it as merely a piece of the usual Drohobych bragging. In any case, the one who told us this, was a boy who had held a first place at Drohobych, but after a semester with us, he slipped back to a very lowly place in class.

"However, later on, I became convinced that the statement was true. An intelligent student from Drohobych, Osyp Bilynsky, a friend of this same Ivan Franko, transferred to our school, and told us that Franko once wrote a German assignment entirely in verse, a whole copybook full, and that the teacher declared himself so surprised as to be unable to evaluate it properly.

"When I was in the sixth class, a student society for Ukrainians was organized in our gymnasium. There were similar ones too in Berezhany, Tarnopil, Lviv, and Stanyslaviv, but none as yet in Drohobych. Why this was so I learned later on, and Franko was the one who told me the reason why. That year a theatrical company under Omelyan Bachynsky came to Sambir and stayed there for two months giving plays in Ukrainian. I shall never forget how enthused I was to hear our Ukrainian speech on the stage. But then, to our great regret, the company left to spend the winter months in Drohobych. During the short vacation at Christmas and New Year, a Polish fellow-student persuaded me to go with him to Drohobych and attend the theatre there. I went and that was the first time I ever travelled by train.

"We saw some stupid kind of farce of no intrinsic value whatever, yet there was a compensation in that we met a number of the students attending the Drohobych Gymnasium. They were most hospitable, they came and dragged us by force from our room at the hotel, and after the performance they took us to supper in a combined restaurant and tavern. To us, this seemed a most extraordinary proceeding, for we were not allowed to do anything of the sort in Sambir. I remember that all through the festivities, I was constantly looking with alarm at the door, dreading the possibility that one of our Sambir teachers might suddenly walk into the room. The whole affair passed off very jovially with plenty of beer and liquor. The Drohobych students boasted that they always carried on like that, and said that sometimes even

the teachers would join them in a drinking party. Thus I got an insight into the way those Drohobych students lived: in drinking, revelling, and chasing after love affairs and amorous adventures.

"The next day following this party, my companion and I went out into the Market Square and there we came across Osyp Bilynsky who was in company with another student, a tall young fellow. We were introduced; it was Ivan Franko, the one we had heard about. Standing there, Bilynsky asked him: 'Would there be any chance, do you think, of organizing a . . .' He did not complete the sentence because of the presence of my Polish companion, but Franko understood what he meant—they had evidently been talking over the matter before we came across them. Franko replied: 'With whom could you organize? Don't you know the students here? Provided there's a tavern and a bottle, that's all they care.' "

One will perceive how great was the development now in the youth who had first come before us pictured as a "small, timid, insignificant-looking backward boy." He is now tall in stature, decided in character, judging his care-free, pleasure-loving comrades severely but justly. Already he perceives the serious side of life and he is preparing to play a man's part in it by hard work and study. He already gives indications that his part in life will be as a worker in the field of literature. He has read widely, has begun to build up his own library, and already has sent in original contributions to at least one periodical. He has exercised his talents by writing his or-

dinary school assignments in dramatic verse in three languages. He has done a good deal of gleaning in the field of folk lore, and in general has won the esteem and encouragement of his teachers.

In 1875, after finishing his studies in Drohobych, he passed his entrance examinations for university matriculation with highest honors, and in the autumn, he departed for Lviv. He carried with him a number of books filled with his own manuscripts, as well as the two notebooks already mentioned containing more than 800 folk songs that he had either taken down orally or copied from other sources. Among his original writings were love songs, dramas, and narrative poems. Of the translations he had made himself, there were: the *Antigone* and *Electra* of Sophocles, two cantos of the *Odyssey,* portions of the Bible (doubtless from the Old Slavonic), including a considerable part of the book of Job and chapters from Isaiah, the first two acts of the German Karl Gutzkow's once famous tragedy *Uriel Acosta,* portions of the *Nibelungenlied,* and the like.

Truly a fine record of accomplishment for a youth of nineteen, which had been achieved not so much by native talent alone, as by talents which had been put to the test of hard and strenuous labor and exploitation.

Chapter III

LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY

ON ARRIVING AT Lviv, Franko found himself in the midst of the miserable partisan squabblings which divided the Galician-Ukrainian intelligentsia at the time. The question of the language in which they ought to write was one thing very much in dispute. If not in Russian, then should they use what some dubbed the Rusin literary language, a jargon of Church Slavonic and the vernacular with a dash of Polish and Russian words and idioms? On the other hand there were those who sought to embellish the vernacular with their own particular inventions and adornments. Both parties, however, gave first place to what they called 'Austro-Ruthenianism,' seeking the favor of the imperial government for themselves. Both looked upon themselves as the natural leaders of the peasant masses, whom they were to lead along the path of salvation, and who, because of their ignorance and lack of development, ought to look up to and obey the leaders in all things, while at the same time the latter did nothing to lift them out of their frightful economic bondage.

Following the example of their elders, the younger element was also divided into two hostile groups, together with a number of neutrals, who inclined now to the one side and then to the other. Under the influence

of these party divisions, both of which were equally unintelligible to him, Franko for a time oscillated between the two until he found himself. Two things contributed to guide him aright, the sources of which are found in the two early sonnets he wrote while still a student in gymnasium; the influence of Kotlyarevsky and the Russian-Ukrainian writers who followed him, and his love for his people's folk songs. These eventually decided him to make the vernacular his literary medium and from this he never departed.

Corresponding to the parties mentioned above, the university had at the time two student societies, the Academical Club (Akademychny Kruzhok) supported by the Muscophiles, and the other with the bizarre name of the Friendly Moneylender (Druzhny Lykhvar) maintained by the Nationalists. Vasyl Lukych, who registered at the same time as Franko, recalls that: "We both registered as members with the Academical Club where Pavlyk, who was to become closely associated with Franko, was already a member. It was not the Muscophile idea that attracted us but purely material and practical considerations. The Friendly Moneylender had no rooms of its own but merely engaged in making loans to its members, while the 'die-hard' Academical Club had the use of three rooms, rent free from a parent organization, including a library and reading room well supplied with periodicals. In addition, the Club also made loans to its members and furnished tickets at reduced rates for students for concerts, the theatre, baths and the like. It had also, since 1874, been publishing a fortnightly mag-

azine, the *Friend* (Druh) in which the members of the Club had a chance to try out their literary gifts."

It was this latter feature which attracted Franko. Already his first printed poem, *Folk Song,* had appeared in its pages. From now on he crowded every number with his contributions, for the most part poems, either original or translations. In it he began to publish the first part of his fantastic novel, *Peter and Dovbush,* written under the influence of the German Hoffman, the Frenchman Sue, and the popular Italian romance, *Rinaldo Rinaldini.* All his works bear the stamp of romanticism, and are full of the mysterious, fantastic adventures and involved situations, all echoes of his wide reading. They were all somewhat weak as to form and their language was a mixture of Ukrainian, Polish, and Russian. Yet the latter was not so much the fault of the author as of the editors who tried to refine his language into what they considered the 'Rusin literary language' mentioned above. But while these productions followed the prevailing taste of the times, which Franko tried to satisfy, they are not as destitute of literary merit as it was once the fashion to call them. "Notwithstanding their defects as to form and language," says Vernyvolya, "they offer a strong contrast to what had been so far appearing in our literature. Their chief sin lies in the fact that they reflect a contemporary taste with which the young author tried to comply."

Among the membership of the Academical Club there was a considerable number of so-called 'moderates,' who were in favor of coming to an amicable understanding

with the rival Nationalists. These, led by Franko and Pavlyk, began to hold meetings to discuss how they could manage to take over control of the club and bring about a union of both societies. At their instigation, some thirty Nationalists were persuaded to join the Academical Club and at a general meeting in 1875, they succeeded in outvoting the 'die-hards' and took the control of the society's organ *Friend* into their own hands. They immediately reformed the language used in it to approximate more nearly to the vernacular, and began a decided trend towards democratic and progressive ideas aiming at greater enlightenment and a national consciousness among the Galician Ukrainians.

All this coincided with the time when the ideas of Drahomaniv were beginning to work among the younger generation in Galicia. Michael Drahomaniv (1841-1895), was the leading scholar of the time in Russian Ukraine. Because of his democratic and progressive ideas, he lost his position as professor at the University of Kiev, and moved to Geneva in Switzerland, where he could work more freely in disseminating his views for arousing and quickening his people to a new national life. From this center he wrote, corresponded, and published books and pamphlets which were smuggled into both Great and Western Ukraine. He began a series of letters to the *Friend,* whose editors had attacked an article he had published elsewhere. They published his first two letters in reply. The debate continued with the result that the promoters of the *Friend* gradually came to a full acceptance of his ideas. In these letters, Drahomaniv re-

proached the younger generation for being inhospitable to Western ideas, and asserted that they did no independent thinking of their own, but simply blindly followed the prejudices of the older generation. Furthermore, he adduced irrefutable arguments to demonstrate that the only way to bring the Galician Ukrainian community into touch with European culture was to develop the vernacular and to use it for literary purposes. He pointed out to the editors of the *Friend* that what they were offering to their readers consisted largely of futilities, and that the writers, while praising the Russian language, clearly showed that they neither understood it well nor its literature, and that they failed to appreciate the progressive and democratic elements in their already existing Ukrainian literature. Finally he pressed upon the younger generation the duty of working for the people in order to liberate the masses from ignorance and exploitation.

These letters made a deep impression on Franko and many of his companions. A personal correspondence began between Franko and Drahomaniv which ripened into a close friendship between the two men and which lasted the rest of their lives. Franko writes that "Drahomaniv was the first and almost the only man who consistently encouraged me." Under his influence he turned from romanticism to realism in his writing. In the *Friend* the language used began to approximate more and more to ordinary living speech. In 1876 he published his masterly poem, the *Hired Hand* (Naymyt) and in 1877 he began a series of realistic sketches, *Boryslav,* all of which originally appeared in the *Friend,* together with a large num-

ber of translations. In 1876 he and his friends published an almanac called *Dnistranka,* a manifesto of the new writing and which contained two of his best early stories and several poems.

Franko was the soul of the whole movement which came into being to spread Drahomaniv's ideas, not only among the university students but also among the senior students in the gymnasium at Lviv. He was constantly organizing new groups to engage in the spread of the new light. His method was to supply them with literature to read and discuss, books on Ukrainian history, ethnography, and fiction. After the books had been read, he led discussions on the subjects. When he saw that his pupils had profited by their reading, he gave them further materials in natural science, Darwin in Polish translation, books on physiology and popular biology, in addition to the latest works in the Polish, German, and French literatures. One of his undertakings about this time was a co-operative translation of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* to be made by a student group. As none of them knew English at the time (Franko himself learned it later on), the translation into Ukrainian was made from a Polish version which had recently appeared. However, Franko was disappointed in this inasmuch as his assistants either did indifferent work or neglected to do their respective shares, so that he had to give up the project for the time being. One who knew him then and came under his influence speaks highly of his pedagogical method: "In talking with us about the things he made us read, he never pressed his own views on us, but tried to influence

our young minds through what we read. He never used the methods of the agitator, nor tried to stir us up against the government authorities, nor attacked religion or the clergy as the older generation falsely asserted."

Although he worked so hard, Franko was always ready to take part in rambles and excursions with the younger element in order to carry on his educational work among them. On the occasion of one ramble through the Kryvchytsky Forest, the writer quoted above recalls that some one asked him to explain what Positivism was. They had heard of it and wanted to learn what it was. "Franko willingly assented, and leaning against a tree, expounded his understanding of that philosophical system. I do not remember how much we profited by the exposition, but it does show that we were eager for knowledge and that Franko tried to satisfy our hunger."

In connection with these student rambles and excursions which were an important feature in the life of those times among the budding intelligentsia, we may note that during the summer vacation of 1876, the editorial staff of the *Friend* made a trip together through the Striy mountain district. They visited with the local clergy and others in many places and had long discussions on the burning questions of the time. One who was of the party said that Franko was attracted to a certain village by an "affair of the heart." The girl in question was Olha Roshkevychivna, daughter of the parish priest of Lolyn, with whom Franko fell desperately in love and could not forget even long after, when she had married another. It is said that some of the loveliest lyrics in his *Withered*

Leaves (Zivyale Lystye) were inspired by this unfortunate love affair. There is every reason to believe that this is quite true, although it is no longer possible to trace the specific lyrics in question.

The deciding factor which helped to determine once for all Franko's attitude to the nationalistic question was the influence of Drahomaniv, but his acquaintance with the great democrat soon had serious results to test the sincerity of his discipleship. Suddenly, in August 1877, Franko, Pavlyk, and practically the whole of the editorial staff of the *Friend* were arrested because of their connection with Drahomaniv, whom the police considered to be the head of a secret international socialist organization. Beginning in January of that same year, the police had been making arrest after arrest of persons suspected of socialist activities. This particular arrest was motivated by the mention of Franko's name in a letter seized by the postal censorship. The letter was from Drahomaniv to a Pole named Kolunicki in which Drahomaniv gave instructions how to organize progressive groups among Ukrainians and suggested that Franko be sent on a propaganda trip through Hungarian Ukraine. Franko says that he had not the slightest knowledge of the suggestion and that in any case he had neither the means nor the time to undertake such a mission. The Polish authorities were at the moment in need of an excuse to intimidate the Ukrainian population and a pretext to compromise them in the eyes of the imperial government so as to strengthen their control over them and keep them down. The proceeding achieved its end in part by terri-

fying many of the Ukrainian student societies in the various gymnasiums for a time. In most of the gymnasiums all records of the most innocent proceedings were ruthlessly burned in a moment of fright and much valuable material perished. Franko was held in prison under investigation for eight months and then sentenced to six weeks imprisonment. Some say nine months, but this evidently includes the entire period of his incarceration.

A student who saw him at this time has left his impression of the young man as he appeared during the trial: "I saw Franko for the first time when I was in the eighth class of the gymnasium at Lviv on the occasion of his trial, when he, together with others, was accused of organizing a secret socialist society, a charge for which there was absolutely no foundation. The presiding judge was a dried-up official who made no concealment of an evident bias against the accused. We students of the upper gymnasium went to listen to the proceedings in the afternoons during the several days the trial lasted, and all of us were greatly impressed by the young Ivan Franko, by his strong character, his intrepid behavior in court, and by the fiery address he made in a ringing metallic voice."

In his autobiographical volume *In the Sweat of The Brow* (V Poti Chola) Franko says: "The senseless prosecution which fell on me like a tile falling on a person's head in the street and which ended in my condemnation, although there was not in my soul a shadow of the crime of which they accused me (neither secret society nor socialism: I was a socialist merely by sympathy like any

peasant, but was far from understanding what scientific socialism was)—this was a fearful and grievous trial to me. The nine months spent in prison was a torture to me. . . . I was treated like a common malefactor, thrown into a cell with from 14 to 18 criminals and vagabonds at the same time. I was transferred from cell to cell in a never-ending series of searches and investigations simply because I 'wrote,' that is: I noted down in pencil on stray scraps of paper found by chance the songs, proverbs, and sayings I heard from the other prisoners, or else my own compositions in verse. Once I spent several weeks in a cell which had but one window and contained 12 persons, 8 of whom slept on the hard plank bed and 4 underneath it because of lack of room. By bribery, for the sake of fresh air, my companions conceded me the 'best place' to sleep, namely: under the window opposite the door. As the window had to be left open day and night for the sake of ventilation, I awoke many a morning with my head powdered with the snow which had blown in during the night."

On coming out of prison Franko discovered that still greater moral trials awaited him. Instead of sympathizing with the young poet, society inflicted on him and his friends a sentence "a hundred times more unjust and cruel." He was excluded from clubs and societies. One of the leading public figures, a professor at the university having noticed him in the reading room of one society, threatened to resign from it, if Franko were not excluded. The compliant directors did so, but the professor in question resigned anyway. People of the older generation,

who were forced to meet him, came to transact their business with him at night or in secret meetings, all of which made him feel deeply degraded. On the other hand this boycott on the part of the elders was made up for by the warm and enthusiastic support of the younger student element who began to rally round him and Pavlyk, to follow their work and to take a lively interest in the discussions which were held in their home. The plain people, too, heard of him and his trials and manifested a sympathetic attitude towards him and his aims. During his imprisonment and trial, Franko began to make a systematic study of the socialistic theories and drifted towards the left, so that the net result of the arbitrary action of the police and judicial authorities was simply to convert him to that of which he had at first been falsely accused.

Franko now stood at the parting of the ways. He could either repent of his 'sins' and become an 'orderly' member of the society which had stigmatized him, or he could voluntarily take his place in the ranks of the proscribed and outcast and, without casting a backward look, seek a new fellowship among them. He chose the latter course and in 1878 with Drahomaniv's financial help, he and Pavlyk began the publication of a periodical called the *People's Friend* (Hromadsky Druh) which frankly announced itself as an organ of socialistic propaganda with the following slogan on its title page:

"The chains and fetters slowly break and fall
Which bound us to an antiquated life
With vested wrongs. Now, with unfettered minds,
Let us rise up, O brothers, to the strife!"

What the nature of the socialism was that he preached, Franko tells us himself: "I never belonged to that sect of the faithful who founded their socialistic program on the dogmas of hatred and class warfare, and I had courage enough amid the sneers and abuses of such adepts openly to carry the standard of a true humanitarian socialism aiming at the ethical, broadly humanistic education of the popular masses for progress and general enlightenment, for personal liberty as well as national, and not for party dogmatism, nor for the despotism of leaders, nor the bureaucratic regimentation of all the phases of everyday life, nor for a parliamentary chicanery to bring in the hoped-for future." We shall see later on how sharply he criticized these latter tendencies in actual practice when he took an active part in political life for practically a decade.

The *People's Friend* showed a marked contrast to all Galician Ukrainian journalism up to this time, not only in content, but especially in tone and spirit. With the levity of youth and the enthusiasm of those who have nothing more to lose, it cast a fiery challenge in the face of the community. "Almost every article, every story, every poem, down to the bibliographical notes on the back covers, was a provocation to the crusted, old-fashioned Galician-Ruthenian routine and inertia. Everywhere, ideas hitherto unheard of among us were expressed in the most incisive form, heretical, lawless. The Polish authorities did all they could to protect our people from these assaults on its peace of mind; they confiscated almost every issue on account of the articles

therein and the courts confirmed the confiscations. Finally they worked up a case against Pavlyk on account of one of his stories which today could be freely printed without the change of a single phrase or the omission of a single word, and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment." Thus Franko describes the mood which prevailed amongst his fellow victims after the first imprisonment and the persecution which followed.

As a result of the case against Pavlyk the *People's Friend* had to suspend publication. Franko however, tried to carry on by issuing periodic brochures, the first series under the title of the *Bell* (Dzvin) and the second called the *Hammer* (Molot), but the police continued to confiscate them as fast as they came out. Franko's personal circumstances were very unfavorable for carrying on still further, and in addition, the ideas he presented were new, readers were few and subscribers still fewer. The editors themselves ran into technical difficulties because of their inexperience with the details of publishing and business practice, and after about a year the enterprise failed completely. Besides poems, satires, and literary criticisms, some of Franko's best early work appeared in the pages of the *People's Friend* and its successors, and they included a translation from the Polish of Scheffe's *What is Socialism?,* his great poem, the *Pioneers* (Kamenyari) and the novel, *Boa Constrictor,* dealing with the hard lot of a peasant community in its passage from agricultural occupations into the stage of ruthless industrial exploitation.

Without giving up his university studies, Franko tried

without success to found another periodical, and then, in co-operation with others, he managed to organize the publishing of a series of booklets under the name of the *Little Library* (Dribna Biblioteka). This ran to fourteen numbers in which there appeared, besides much original work, many of his translations from European literatures, such as: Byron's *Cain,* Zola's *L'Assommoir,* and selections from Goethe, Heine, Hood, Moore, Shelley, and Lermontov.

In 1879 he entered into close relations with the Polish socialists of the province in order to seek to work out a common program of action between them and the Ukrainian radicals. He went about giving lectures to working men on the principles of political economy and wrote for the Polish socialist organ *Labor* (Praca). From one point of view this relationship with the Polish socialists was advantageous to Franko, because it brought him into contact with Polish progressive journalism and its organs. From that time on, he became a regular contributor to several of them, writing principally on Ukrainian affairs and conditions. On the other hand, in the eyes of the Galician police this activity marked him as a 'dangerous' socialist, and in the suspicions thus aroused is clearly to be seen the reason for the renewed persecutions which he was called upon to undergo and which culminated in his second arrest and imprisonment in the spring of 1880.

Chapter IV

LITERARY TRIBULATIONS

IT WAS EARLY in March, 1880, when Franko was arbitrarily arrested for the second time. He had left Lviv to spend some time visiting a friend named Genyk who lived in the village of Bereziv in Kolomiya County. On the way he was suddenly arrested in the hamlet of Yablon and, together with Genyk himself and some others, was dragged into the case against Pavlyk's sisters which was then being tried at Kolomiya. Franko and his friends were all held on suspicion in prison for three months while a vigorous investigation was being made to try to implicate them. When it was shown that absolutely nothing could be proved against them, they were released without a word of apology or explanation. Franko, because he was not a resident of Kolomiya County, was ordered to return to his native place, Nahuyevychi, under police escort. "This trip from police station to police station through Stanyslaviv, Striy, and Drohobych, was one of the hardest experiences of my life," wrote Franko. He arrived at Drohobych with a high fever. Here he was thrown for a time into a dreadful cell which he describes in his story *At the Bottom* (Na Dni), and the same day he was despatched on foot accompanied by a gendarme to Nahuyevychi. On the way they were overtaken by a violent rainstorm and Franko was drenched to the skin. He took

a violent ague and after lying at home for a week in miserable conditions, he returned to Kolomiya to get in touch with Genyk again. He spent a "dreadful week" in a small hotel there where he wrote the story, *At the Bottom,* mentioned above, and with his last money sent it to Lviv. After that he lived for three days on three cents he found in the sand by the side of the river Prut, and when that was gone, shut himself up in his room at the hotel and lay for a day and a half in a high fever, helpless and totally discouraged, awaiting death.

From this trying state he was saved by one of his companions in prison, whom Genyk sent to find him, He went back home first to get a passport at Drohobych and then returned to Genyk's home in Bereziv. He stayed with Genyk several weeks and here, walking about in the bracing mountain air, he slowly regained his strength after the severe illness brought on by his brutal experiences. However, the chief inspector of police at Kolomiya learned of his residence and ordered the gendarmes to bring him to Kolomiya. As Franko had not the means to hire a conveyance, he was marched there on foot by the gendarmerie and the hard walking seriously injured his feet. The chief inspector raged when he found that Franko had a passport which entitled him to be in Kolomiya County, but the police made it so hard for him that he could stay there no longer. He therefore returned to Nahuyevychi and in the autumn went to Lviv and registered again at the university.

Yet this trying year of 1880 in Franko's life is noteworthy for a great outburst of his poetic genius, expressed

chiefly in reflective lyrics. In all these verses, many of which were actually written in Kolomiya Prison according to the dates attached to them (he was in confinement during the spring months of March, April, and May) there pulsate a spirit of life, resistance, courage, and belief in the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood, of right over injustice. The best of them are: *The Eternal Spirit of Revolt* (Vichny Revolyutsioner), *Spring Songs* (Vesnyanky), his *Paean to Work* (Yak te Zalizo), and the patriotic *Ukraina.* But there are other notes as well, such as in *Spring Scene* (Vzhe Sonechko) with its sardonic last line, the bitter expression of disillusionment in *Forsaken* (Vidturalysya Lyudy Mene); yet the sympathy and magnanimity of the poet's soul finds expression as well in *The Enemy* (Ne Lyudy nashi Vorohy).

The poet in Franko had not as yet spoken out in such strong vigorous tones. In the poetical productions of 1880 are found all of his dominant social and political ideas: his social awareness and his overmastering desire to kindle the needed spirit in the hearts of men in order to bring about changes and banish the crusted evils of the past. The poems of the period, however, are external in the sense that they do not reveal to us a total picture of the poet's inner emotional and spiritual life as do the verses of a later date. Yet in all of them there was a challenge and a pulsating power which accounts for the enthusiasm with which they were received by the younger generation to whom Franko was now on the way of becoming almost an idolized prophet and leader. It may be noted here that in the 90's the majority of students in

the upper gymnasiums of Galicia manifested a preference for Franko as a poet over Shevchenko, for they considered him to be nearer to themselves, in spirit and expression. This is probably to be accounted for in part by the fact that the then available edition of Shevchenko was very expensive, and also that the selections from the *Kobzar* printed in the school books were mutilated and crippled by the Polish censorship, whereas Franko's *From Heights and Depths* (Z Vershyn i Nyzyn), the collected edition of his poems, was much cheaper and in addition had the added charm of being a prohibited book for gymnasium students, for the possession of which one risked being punished, with the result as might naturally be expected, that it was read all the more.

The years which followed 1880 were times of hard struggle and tribulation for Franko in attempting to make a living by literary work. In the beginning, he, together with Pavlyk, had gone to the university with the aim of preparing for a career in the teaching profession, but as conditions were then, the first arrest and imprisonment had dashed all prospects of following it up. There was absolutely no chance for a man to get an appointment who had a police record for subversive political activity against him. Franko, writing in 1902, recalls how the course of his life was shaped by the first imprisonment and intensified by the second: "The sentence knocked both Pavlyk and myself out of our course completely. We were students in the philosophical faculty, counting on a pedagogical career, but we had to say farewell to it all and strive right away to earn our bread by journalism. To be

sure, I did not abandon my university studies, but I now no longer looked upon them as the necessary preparation for a career, but solely as a means of filling up the gaps in my knowledge." Slavish journalistic work on Nationalist organs with whose fundamental principles he could not agree, bouts of sickness, lack of means, depression, gloomy prospects, disappointments, misunderstandings with his best friend and mentor Drahomaniv, all these account for the scarcity of his poetic productiveness in the five years following the great outburst of 1880.

In the beginning of 1881, he collaborated with another writer named Beley in editing a monthly, *Light* (Svit), but not being able to earn enough by such work to support himself in Lviv, he was compelled to return home to Nahuyevychi in the spring of the same year. Here he suffered an attack of typhus and after his recovery he did farm work, at the same time sending in his contributions to *Light.* He also wrote for the magazine *Dawn* (Zorya) published by Drahomaniv's partisans in Kiev. This was a period of deep depression for the poet, but none the less he worked on his great translation of *Faust,* completed it and with Drahomaniv's assistance saw it in print in 1882. He also wrote his novel *Zakhar Berkut,* which won a prize in a literary competition under the auspices of Partytsky's monthly *Dawn,* published in Lviv, in whose pages it appeared serially during 1883. *Zachar Berkut* is ostensibly an historical novel dealing with the Ukrainian past of the twelth century, but under the mask of very readable historical fiction, it sets forth Franko's social and progressive ideas for the present times, as he

did in all of his work produced up to that time and later. Yet as it glorified a period of the nation's glorious democratic past, it suited the taste of the reading public and met with a very favorable reception.

About the end of 1882 *Light* collapsed. This was a painful blow to Franko who had provided the lion's share of the material it contained. If the *People's Friend* had gone under, it had been on account of official persecution, while the *Light* had gone out because of public indifference and because of the divergences amongst those who ought to have been its supporters. During its life the *Light* had been really an interesting periodical; its contents were much more decidedly socialistic in tone than those of the *People's Friend,* but as they were generally couched in a calm and moderate manner, and non-provocative in expression, it escaped without the confiscation of a single number. Its chief merit was that for the first time it brought together on a common ground the various progressive and radical leaders among both Galician and Russian Ukrainians as well as those who were living abroad. It was the first attempt to unite all the progressive and radical elements of all Ukraine. The reasons for its failure were personal, rather than questions of principle. At a distance in the country, Franko was unable to edit it properly, and Beley, who was employed on the daily *Action* (Dilo), could not give proper attention to the details of publication, so that the subscribers, discouraged by the irregularity of its issue, lost interest and failed to pay their bills for its support.

This was a period of great discouragement and de-

pression for Franko and for a time he almost sank under the burden of worry but the soul of the poet reasserted itself and shook itself free from the fetters of the moral and spiritual inertia which was creeping over him. In the beginning of 1883 he left his home in the country and went back again to Lviv to begin a new period of feverish journalistic toil.

For a few months he worked on *Action* (Dilo), the first Ukrainian daily newspaper to come into being, but in the spring he accepted a commission to write a biography of Volodyslav Fedorovych, a former member of the Austrian Parliament. He went to Vikno where he stayed for several months gathering material and working on the project. He then returned to Nahuyevychi and began preparations for a work on the political and economic history of Galicia since 1810. Then in the autumn we find him again in Lviv where he accepted positions on the staff of *Action* and Partytsky's monthly *Dawn*. Both of these were controlled by Nationalists and Franko's acceptance of staff positions on them can be explained only by his necessity of securing any kind of employment, and by his recent mood while he was compelled to live in the country at home. These came to him also as a result of new tendencies which were making themselves felt for a drawing together of the older and younger generations in Ukrainian Galicia. Towards the end of 1884, Partytsky consented to sell the property rights in *Dawn* to Franko who immediately invited Drahomaniv and another prominent radical, Terletsky, to join the staff as contributors. Although Drahomaniv was strongly opposed to having anything at

all to do with the Nationalists, he yet promised his co-operation and even drew up an outline of the part he would take in contributing to *Dawn* under Franko's direction. In the meantime Franko left Lviv to spend some time at Vikno, working over the materials he was gathering there for Fedorovych's biography, but when he returned he met with a bitter disappointment. The gulf was still too deep between the older and the younger generations to be bridged so easily, and the former were not yet ready to concede the ascendancy to the latter. Some of the 'die-hards' not only censured Partytsky for allowing Franko to write for the magazine, but they also condemned his writings as having no value. Tempers came to the boiling point so that it is hardly to be wondered at, that Franko did not receive the fulfillment of Partytsky's promise to transfer *Dawn* into his hands. Heavy pressure was brought to bear and in the end the magazine was handed over to the control of the Shevchenko Society in Lviv. One incident that fanned the flames and contributed to the decision was the fact that Franko attended the funeral of a certain radical leader named Narolsky who had given orders in his will that he was to be buried without the benefit of clergy and with no religious ceremonies whatever. Both Nationalists and Muscophiles alike interpreted this as a public declaration of his own attitude and beliefs on Franko's part, and he was fiercely attacked for his participation in an 'atheistic funeral.' As a result, early in 1885, he broke with the Nationalists altogether and resigned from both *Action* and *Dawn*. He then went to Kiev to seek support for the founding of an

independent literary periodical to be published in Lviv. This was done on the advice of Drahomaniv who dissuaded Franko from any further collaboration with the Nationalist organs, for he knew that it could only result in injury to his talents, as he would never have the freedom to write how and what he wished. The proposed periodical was to be an outright progressive one, intended to meet the desires of both Russian and Galician Ukrainians. However, it was merely another disappointment for Franko. Nothing came of the project for the Kievans would not advance the necessary funds and on his return to Lviv, Franko was compelled by financial need to join the staff of *Dawn* again, and even consented that his work should be censored by the responsible editor, Borkovsky. This action on Franko's part so incensed Drahomaniv that it almost caused a breach between the two men.

Despite all this, however, Franko could not abandon the idea of a separate periodical under his own direction, and in the spring of 1886 he again went to Kiev with his plans. Once again the project came to nothing, but this time Franko returned to Lviv with a young bride, Olha Korunzhynska, whom he married in Kiev. The marriage was a happy one, except that for a few years in later life it was clouded by frequent attacks of hysteria which afflicted Mrs. Franko, attacks so violent that for some time Franko was compelled to live away from home in order to secure the necessary peace and quietness his work required. As to the nature of their married life we have this testimony from the Rev. Fr. Volyansky who knew the couple intimately: "In his married life Franko was a

good husband and father, and as his work required freedom from disturbance, Mrs. Franko took complete charge of the household affairs, and Franko left everything unreservedly in her hands. Although at times the mother's indulgence to her children went beyond due bounds, yet Franko, who saw it all with disapproval, usually contented himself by saying: 'Well, that's the way Mother wants it, I suppose.' "

These were the years of poetic scarcity, particularly so from 1884 to the beginning of 1886, for in his collected works we find only four poems dating from that period. Four poems from a poet so fertile is a clear indication that his mind was occupied with other things which left no room for thought on the themes from which his poetry sprang in earlier years. Franko, who hitherto had been in conflict with the leaders of the community on account of the "characterless Ruthenianism" they displayed, had compromised with them. This compromise, far from strengthening the poet's opinions for further flights, had crippled them. He was writing political articles, toiling as a paid journalistic craftsman in co-operation with those who were opposed to him in spirit. Consequently the poet in Franko remained practically mute until the time when Franko the man was forced to break with the 'characterless Ruthenianism' he was working for. Reading the record of those days in his letters to Drahomaniv and the latter's replies, one does not wonder that Franko wrote so little poetry during those years. The poet had to await his spiritual liberation. But the hour did come at last: it came in a painful fashion and caused him to take a step,

regrettable in some aspects, but one which eventually worked out for his good. In autumn, 1886, he lost his position on *Dawn.* There had been constant friction. It culminated at last in Franko's summary dismissal from the magazine's staff because of a poem of Rudansky's which he allowed to appear and an article which he himself wrote on Boris Hrinchenko, notwithstanding the fact that before printing them he had submitted both in advance to the censorship of the responsible editor.

Finding himself in a serious situation, with a young family dependant on him for support, Franko, as the bread-winner, 'hired out to the neighbors,' as he put it later on. He joined the staff of the Polish *Lviv Courier* and occupied this position from 1887 to 1897. He often spoke of this period as his 'ten years' servitude.' As to its total effect on his work there are two points of view. For example: Vernyvolya says, "This was a great tragedy for Franko, the effects of which are reflected in his creative work. From being a free creative writer, he became a paid journeyman, the Ukrainian poet was transformed into a Polish publicist. In the bibliography of his works, drawn up on the occasion of the 25th jubilee of his literary activity, the pages devoted to this period literally swarm with titles in Polish and only here and there does there occur one in Ukrainian. It is true that the majority of the pieces in Polish deal with Ukrainian matters, for the most part concerning economics, science and literary criticism, but none the less, it was a great loss for Ukrainian literature, for it coincided with the years of Franko's fullest artistic development." On the other

hand, Krushelnytsky says: "From the moment when Franko broke the ties of his dependency on the Galician Ukrainian community, his figure began to stand out with ever-increasing distinctness against the background of our national life. For the space of ten years Franko became the trumpet of Ukrainian affairs in the field of Polish journalism, where he spared nothing and no one; every manifestation of lack of character in our political and social life, every instance of political shortsightedness on the part of the leaders of our people was subjected to a searching and pitiless criticism. The deep significance of Franko as a critic of Galician 'Ruthenianism' can be demonstrated from a careful review of the articles he wrote in the Polish press."

In addition to his journalism, Franko also took an active part in organizing the Polish democratic elements into a party which should work hand in hand with similar elements among the Ukrainian population. He spared no effort in his work among the Poles, but time brought disillusionment as to a successful combination of the two movements. Concerning this, Franko wrote in later years: "From the moment when our younger group broke all relations with the older element and transferred their activities to Polish periodicals without however ceasing to labor for our own ideals, the change of terrain pushed into the foreground the idea of the possibility of drawing together the radical and progressive elements among both Poles and Rusins for the attainment of a common goal, namely: the curbing of the aristocratic and reactionary ruling class in the province. . . . But it took ten whole

years, during which both parties grew in strength and influence, to convince those Rusin idealists (including Franko, of course) that there was no help at all to be attained in this way for the Rusin cause, and that only by working by one's self on one's own field could a harvest be expected."

Yet it cannot be said that Franko entirely 'broke the Ukrainian pen,' as he put it himself, during this period of his literary activity. He published the first edition of his collected verse in 1887 with the aid of funds from Kiev. It came out under the title of *From Heights and Depths* (Z Vershyn i Nyzyn) and a little more than half the volume was taken up by his one epic poem, *The Passing of Serfdom* (Panski Zharty) which had been written in January and February of the same year just before he entered into the service of the *Lviv Courier.* In the same year too, he took part in the publication of three *Almanacs,* on one of which he collaborated, while the other two he edited wholly himself. These *Almanacs* were promoted and mainly written by women as their contribution to the emancipation of womanhood, which at that time was just beginning to get under way in Galicia. This was one of the causes in which Franko took a leading part. Dr. Kurovych has written: "Franko was the prime encourager of the movement for the emancipation of our Ukrainian womanhood in Galicia. He promoted it by his own writings, taught women authors how to write, corrected their first works and developed their literary gifts. It can fairly be said that had it not been for him, the emancipation of womanhood with us would

have been retarded for many a long year. Natalya Kobrynska and other leading women writers of the time were the spiritual children of Ivan Franko."

In 1889 Franko published his poem, *The Death of Cain* (Smert Kayina), one of the profoundest of his speculative and symbolic verses. The poem seemed to be little understood by the general public at the time it appeared, yet it is characteristic of Franko's philosophical strivings to fathom the goal of human existence. This is to be accomplished by seeking to harmonize both reason and emotion in the inner man and thus to find the lost Paradise within the individual soul. The work bears testimony to the great influence which the English poet Byron seems to have exercised over Franko. It followed shortly on the publication of his revised and completed translation of Byron's *Cain*. In *The Death of Cain* Franko develops some of the Englishman's ideas but modernizes them and carries them out in his own original way. The poem aroused a good deal of denunciation from the pulpit from some clerics who strongly disapproved of the presentation of a Biblical character and theme treated in such a manner, but the years have brought an increasing appreciation of its poetical and philosophical significance.

The summer of this same year, 1889, saw Franko arrested and imprisoned for the third, and fortunately, the last time. It occurred just before the elections to the provincial parliament and was manifestly motivated by the purpose of the Polish authorities to spread terror among the Ukrainian population in order to prevent the election of any 'undesirable' elements. Among those arrested

were; besides Franko and Pavlyk, the Polish radical leader Wyslouk with some of his supporters, and a number of students from Kiev who had come to Galicia for a tour of fraternization, together with their hosts, students at the University of Lviv. Not a single one of those arrested knew at the time the reason for their seizure, and never even learned why afterwards, neither could the Ukrainian members of the parliament get any answers to their interpellations in the Chamber. The authorities made every possible effort to make out a case of state treason against the prisoners; they carried out on a large scale investigations and arraignments before local courts all over the province, but they failed completely to find any evidence that would stand the test in courts even as biased as the ones they had at their disposal. After having been held on suspicion for three months in prison, the accused were all released without a word of explanation or apology.

While in prison, Franko wrote his *Prison Sonnets* (Tyuremni Sonety), a sort of versified journal of his experiences of prison life, on the general theme of man's inhumanity to man. He also wrote some short narrative poems on various aspects of Jewish life which were published later as *Jewish Melodies* (Zhydivski Melodiyi), the finest of which is *Surka,* an "apotheosis of mother love." He also wrote some stories of Jewish life in prose entitled *Towards the Light* (Do Svitla). This was the first time in Ukrainian literature that any aspects of the ordinary life of the Jews had been treated in a sympathetic spirit and from a broadly humanitarian point of

view. Franko well knew the usual Jewish types hitherto universally portrayed in Ukrainian literature, the Jewish middleman or tavern-keeper, who fawned on the landowning gentry and served their interests (he portrays one such in his *Passing of Serfdom*), the speculator and the exploiter of the peasant, but in *Jewish Melodies* he depicts the tragedy that haunts the poorer Jewish people because of their separate life, isolated from the community, yet serving it, the poverty-stricken peddlers and the household drudges, and how much they had to suffer often from the happier, richer, and more successful members of their own race.

There are two small but interesting details in this period which emerge from Franko's correspondence with Drahomaniv. Both concern projected journeys: one to America, the other to Vienna. The latter was realized in 1892, when the poet went to study at the Imperial University in order to win the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1894. The other, a journey to America, was only mentioned once and then dropped. However, the subject must have occupied his mind for many years as is clearly seen in remarks he made when his mind wandered during his last illness. Speculation on the matter is fruitless, but yet what might Franko not have done in the freer air of our country, had he been able to carry out the idea?

Chapter V

WIDENING LITERARY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY

IT WAS IN the last decade of the nineteenth century that the modern Ukrainian renascence began to show itself with force and the 90's were characterized by a striking revival among the Ukrainian population in Galicia. The peasant masses awoke from their long slumber and began to give utterance to ideas which astonished all who heard them. The seed which Franko and other disciples of Drahomaniv had for years been sowing on Galician soil had taken root and was now springing up. The group headed by Franko and Pavlyk had gradually grown in internal strength and had won a considerable number of supporters. Feeling themselves strong enough, they took steps in 1890 to found and publish an organ of publicity and propaganda, a fortnightly review called the *People* (Narod). The editors were Franko and Pavlyk and they soon gathered around themselves a large number of collaborators from both the intelligentsia and the lower classes. The *People* was well edited; it adopted a middle line of approach to include all classes of the nation, the educated and cultured as well as the progressive peasantry. Thus its appeal was adapted to all and it was distinguished by a wealth and variety of content such as

had rarely appeared in any Ukrainian periodical heretofore. It numbered among its contributors Drahomaniv, who by this time had moved to Sofia to a chair in the University there, and who gladly and generously supported it to the day of his death in 1895, both by sending articles and by assuring it support from his friends in Russian Ukraine.

In the autumn of 1892, the group which gathered around the *People* took a further step by organizing a separate political party to which they gave the name of the Rusin-Ukrainian Radical Party. This was the first political party, in the European sense, to come into being in Galicia, a party with a clearly defined economic and political program by which it appealed for support to the popular masses. The party considered itself definitely socialistic; it preached a so-called 'minimal' socialism, like similar European parties, as the necessary basis for the entire national, economic, political, and cultural life of the Galician Ukrainian community, keeping in mind first of all the interests of the peasant masses and taking into account their psychology. Franko and Danylovych were the authors of the party's platform. In practice, the young party devoted itself to eradicating everything that savored of the 'Austro-Ruthenianism' already mentioned. It first turned its guns on the so-called New Era, that is, an agreement made with the Polish ruling aristocracy by a number of Nationalist deputies who had been successful in the elections of 1893. By this agreement, the Nationalists, in return for some concessions in the cultural field: the promise of two professorships in

the university, and more Ukrainian gymnasiums, undertook to refrain from further agitation in the political and economic sphere.

The new Radical Party, although organized without peasant participation, nevertheless stirred up the Ukrainian peasantry to a hitherto unknown degree. The new watchwords as: universal suffrage, freedom of speech and of the press, reforms in taxation and agrarian affairs, enthused the masses to an extraordinary extent, and through all Galicia, a stirring movement, with mass-meetings for political discussion, soon got under way. In these mass-meetings it was not only members of the intelligentsia who did the talking, but many eloquent speakers from among the peasantry were discovered who knew how to electrify their hearers with their addresses. The more enlightened portion of the peasantry ranged itself under the standard of the Radical Party, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Muscophiles and all the measures employed by the Nationalists, together with the aid of the reactionary clergy of both camps, in order to repress this growth of independence among the people, the Radical Party grew consistently and new recruits were continuously added to it from among the intelligentsia. Franko was the soul of the whole party. He wrote articles of all sorts, pamphlets, and flyers, explaining the party's aims; he spoke at mass-meetings all over the province, and wherever a group of radicals came into being, Franko was immediately in the midst of it.

In the course of time, as is always the case, differences emerged in the party, separate groupings of individuals

among both older and younger elements, divergences which eventually led to the breakup of the original party and the formation of new parties. "During the first few years these differences did not often rise to the surface," says Dr. Okhrymovych, who participated in the movement from the very beginning with Franko and his companions, "yet the difference between the older generation and the younger men was well manifested. The convictions and opinions of the older radicals favored the stateless, social ideals of Drahomaniv, while we younger radicals were enthused by the historical materialism and collectivism of Karl Marx.

"In addition, the older ones considered themselves as practical social-political workers and called us younger ones theoreticians and doctrinaires. In return, we younger ones accused the elders of compromise and inconsistency. These reproaches were particularly aimed at Franko by the younger elements. To the younger men he appeared too deliberate, too circumspect, too little on the left wing, not sufficiently radical, decided, and consistent. In this regard we esteemed Pavlyk more highly, although Pavlyk seemed to us to be too naive and uncritical, too one-sided and dazzled by Drahomaniv. Franko took a critical attitude toward Drahomaniv and Marxism and tended to revisionism and Fabianism. However we respected Franko for this critical attitude, for although he reproached us younger ones as doctrinaires, yet he understood us much better than Pavlyk and could talk to us more easily than Pavlyk, Danylovych and the older radicals."

The Fabianism is, of course, a reference to the famous Fabian Society, a group of socialists organized in London in 1884 for the gradual spread of socialism without bloody revolution. George Bernard Shaw was one of its founders. This passage as well as what has already been quoted from Franko himself utterly refutes the official Soviet view that Franko was a precursor of and would have been a sympathizer with the Communistic regime in Ukraine today.

Despite all this activity Franko kept up his literary productiveness. In 1890 he published a volume of collected stories and sketches all drawn from the life of the working classes under the title of *In the Sweat of the Brow* (V Poti Chola). The volume included the author's own autobiography given in the form of "an extract from a letter of I. F. to M. Drahomaniv." Almost all the pieces which make up the book are, as Franko says, "descriptions of real persons whom I knew, of actual events which I either witnessed myself or heard of from eye-witnesses. They depict in outline some out-of-the-way corners of our land, which I, as the saying goes, 'measured with my own feet.' In a certain sense, therefore, they are all autobiographical." As in a kaleidoscope the various types pass before the reader's eyes: exploited peasants, unfortunate artisans, Jews, thieves, prisoners, Gypsies, vagrant women, yet all enveloped in the writer's warm sympathy, touched with gentle humor and sly satire, but all revealing the injustices and inequalities of the social order. This was realism in literature, a realism far from the romanticism of Franko's early writings, and

such as no one in Galicia had hitherto attempted.

The same year also he began to bring out his poems for children. The first was his inimitable and eternally youthful *Mickie the Fox* (Lys Mykyta), inspired by the medieval animal epic, *Reynard the Fox.* Since *Lys Mykyta* first appeared in 1890, that is, fifty-eight years ago, it has been reissued from time to time in twelve different editions, the last as late as 1944, an edition edited by Dr. V. Symovych, the great philologist, shortly before his death, and published at Krakow even under the stress of war conditions. The next year (1891) he issued a versified adaptation for children of Cervantes' *Don Quixote,* and followed this with similar volumes, the last being a book of fables, *When the Animals Talked* (Koly Zviri Hovoryly) in 1903.

In 1893 there appeared the second, greatly enlarged and improved edition of his *From Heights and Depths,* which was received with the warmest enthusiasm by the younger generation of Galician Ukrainians. The volume brought something new with it, not only in regard to its richly variegated and interesting content, but in respect to form. The slavish reproduction of the old-time folk rhythms, the unpardonable paraphrases and imitations of Shevchenko common to all the Galician poets up to then was replaced by Franko's use of European varied metres and beautiful stanzas, and instead of the old jejune stock poetical imagery, the reader was greeted by original figures and striking turns of speech. Among other things, the volume contained all the lyrics on love which Franko had so far written and which later formed part

of his lyrical drama, *Withered Leaves.*

The same year, too, Franko published his first, and at the same time his finest drama, *Stolen Happiness* (Ukradene Shchastye), which by some mistake only obtained the second instead of the first prize in a competition organized by the provincial Drama Society. This play was followed by others, the best of which, after *Stolen Happiness,* is his comedy, *The Teacher* (Uchytel) which he wrote in 1896.

At the same time Franko continued to pursue his graduate studies. From 1892 to 1894 he studied at the Imperial University in Vienna, and by the presentation of a monograph on Ivan Vyshensky, an old Kozak worthy, he earned the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Soon after this, the incumbent of the chair of Ukrainian Language and Literature at the University of Lviv passed away, and Franko began to take the necessary steps to qualify for the position. He was the only logical candidate and all the progressive elements in the Ukrainian community, particularly the younger ones, greatly rejoiced when the news was made public that Franko had been nominated by the philosophical faculty of the university as a candidate for the vacant professorship. On February 18, 1895, Franko publicly read his probationary thesis on the theme: "Naymychka, by Taras Shevchenko." The lecture was a brilliant success. Immediately thereafter, the college of professors met and elected him to the chair, and recommended him to the authorities for confirmation. This step was usually a mere preliminary formality, but another bitter disappointment awaited Franko. The gov-

ernor of the province, the Polish Count Casimir Badeni, refused to approve the appointment of a man who had been three times in prison, and gave the candidate's "political past" as the reason for his refusal. There were also some 'die-hards' among his own compatriots still hostile enough to applaud the decision. This is what Franko himself wrote concerning the incident while it was still fresh: "The united forces of the government, together with some petrified Rusins, managed to save the country from the disaster which, without doubt, would have resulted from my lectures. 'God save us! how could such a man be allowed to teach in the university? Just look at the ragged frockcoat he walks about in!' This was the way one brother Rusin qualified my candidacy—the same man who was drawing a fat salary for his patriotic work for the good of Austria and Ruthenia. It is clearly manifest that with such an argument my candidacy for a professorship was bound to fail, and the reason assigned: my 'political past' was merely a polite veneer to conceal the real reason." Needless to say, the judgment of history has passed an ignominious sentence of shame on all those who contributed to keep Franko out of a chair of teaching and scholarship for which he was so uniquely fitted.

In the beginning of 1894, Franko began to publish a semi-monthly, *Life and Word* (Zhyttya i Slovo), dedicated to literature, history, and folk lore, the first periodical of its kind on European lines to appear in Galicia. It survived for three years and in its pages, besides an immense variety of articles, verse, reviews, and stories, there

appeared two of Franko's novels: *The Bases of Society* (Osnovy Suspilnosty) and *For Heart and Home* (Dlya Domashnoho Ognyshcha), together with his translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King,* and the original dramas mentioned above.

By now, Franko's wide literary and scientific activity was gradually winning for him in some measure the appreciation even of the older generation, although the sharp tone of his articles aimed at them in *Life and Word* would not allow them to acknowledge it. His quietly growing fame as a great poet was immeasurably enhanced by the appearance in 1896 of a small elegantly printed volume containing the finest of his love lyrics. This was his justly celebrated *Withered Leaves* (Zivyale Lystye) with a richness of feeling and form which Galician Ukrainian literature had never before produced hitherto. It is a collection of sixty lyrics, each individual, yet all linked together by the single theme of an experience of unrequited love. Franko called it a lyric drama and invented a fictitious personage to whom the authorship of the lyrics was ascribed: "The hero of these poems who reveals in them his inner personality is deceased. He was a man of weak will, of luxuriant imagination and deep emotions, but poorly adapted to practical life." The collection is divided into three acts, 'handfuls' they are called, setting forth the course of the hero's passion up to its tragic end by suicide, after the one whom he vainly loved had married another. With few exceptions each poem is an individual unit, and they were written at various times, one at least as early as 1882. The general impression was

that here for the first time Franko revealed his true self as a poet, and *Withered Leaves* won him more admirers than all his previous poetry. To be sure, some voices were raised in adverse criticism, coming from those who were covered with "the dust of their peculiar clericalism," and one prominent critic, Vasyl Shchurat, who perceived evidences of 'decadence' in the poems. To him, however, Franko replied in the following vigorous lines:

"You found much gloom and grief in what I wrote—
Life gives us that in its entirety.
But, brother, I have still another note:
The note of joy, of liberty.
A decadent? Son of a race oppressed
Am I, which rises, despite every clog.
My watchwords: freedom, labor, zest—
A peasant, I—prologue, not epilogue."

The few notes of dissent, however, were soon drowned in the mighty chorus of approval. Generally speaking, it was as though the community was "getting used" to Franko, taking him into its collective heart, and without being aware of it, was passing through a stage of spiritual transformation due to his influence.

To this general feeling and the sympathy of the masses for one who had sprung from their midst is to be ascribed the fact that when in March, 1897, the Radical Party put up Franko as their candidate for both the imperial and provincial legislatures, neither the Nationalists nor the Muscophiles who in the meantime had come to a secret understanding to join forces against the Radicals, ventured to oppose him by nominating contesting

candidates. Although Franko, as the result of incredible fraud, chicanery, and intimidation, was defeated in the voting, the sympathy of the majority was obviously on his side.

However, this year was to prove a still stormier one for Franko, for it was marked by two final clashes with his public, in one of which he lost his means of livelihood for the time being, and in the other he might have suffered the loss of the sympathy of his own community which he was now beginning to enjoy.

About two months after the elections had taken place, there appeared in the German-language weekly *Time* (Die Zeit) published in Vienna an article written by Franko dealing with the Polish poet Mickiewicz entitled *A Poet of Deceit.* The article dealt with Mickiewicz's poem *Konrad Wallenrod* with special emphasis on the well known line: "The captive's only weapon is deceit." Franko asserted that the glorification of perfidy as a weapon for a patriotic end was a leading idea in the poetic work of Mickiewicz, and he concluded with the words: "It is a sorry symptom in a nation when it unreservedly esteems such a poet as its national hero and prophet, and continues to feed its coming generations on such poisonous fruits of his spirit." The recent elections had been marked by a series of arbitrary arrests, brutal beatings and mass imprisonments by the police under the control of the Polish authorities, who at the same time suppressed all attempts to give publicity abroad to these acts of violence. When the Polish governor of Galicia, Count Badeni, on a visit to Krakow, was questioned as to the

manner in which the elections were being carried on, he falsely and cynically made a solemn and public declaration that "The elections in Galicia are being carried out with perfect legality." Writing about these events later on, Franko says: "These words of Count Badeni were telegraphed all over the world, and foreign newspapers refused to accept any reports about the actual conditions in Galicia, hiding behind the pretext that Count Badeni had made a solemn declaration that all was being done in accordance with the law. The Lviv authorities confiscated every reporter's account about the murderings, mutilations and mass arrests by the police in connection with the elections. This again they did on the basis of Count Badeni's declaration that legality prevailed, and that consequently all reports of illegality must of necessity be false."

It is not to be wondered at therefore that Franko felt his opinion of the leading motives of Mickiewicz's poetry fully confirmed by such recent illustrations of the use of perfidy for patriotic ends on the part of the Polish governor and authorities. On the one hand, while it is often impossible to refrain from giving utterance to a truth that has become crystal clear in one's mind, yet on the other hand, it is as often impossible to proclaim it publicly with impunity. Any illusions that Franko had cherished as to the possibility of Poles and Ukrainians working together on the basis of a common democratic program were rudely and finally dispelled. A sweeping storm of destructive indignation from amongst all classes of the Polish population broke over Franko's head on account of

the article. The entire Polish press attacked him with incredible abuse; all ties whatever between Franko and Polish circles were snapped at once. The *Lviv Courier* summarily dismissed him without any notice, and publicly struck his name from its editorial staff, and Franko was suddenly left without an income to face the prospect of starvation for himself and his family.

As if that were not enough, Franko shortly after came into conflict with his own Ukrainian community. Towards the end of spring there appeared a Polish translation of his *Galician Sketches,* a volume of short stories with a foreword by the author entitled *Something about Myself* (Nieco o Sobie Samym). This foreword was a sort of personal confession written two years previously in 1895. The publisher had tried as a matter of policy to persuade Franko from issuing it and held it back as long as he could. Franko refused and at length it appeared just at the worst possible moment. As it is of great interest in understanding the character of the poet and as it was left out in the second edition of the book, a few passages are here quoted. After giving a few details as to his life and activity, Franko went on: "First of all let me confess that which many a patriot will consider a mortal sin: I do not love the Rusins. Compared to the ardent love for a "brother tribe" which often gushes from the columns of Polish conservative periodicals, my confession will occasion great surprise. But what can be done about it when it is true? I am now no longer of an age to love blindly and naively, and can talk soberly on such a tender subject as love. Therefore I repeat: I do

not love the Rusins. I have found among them so little of real character, so much of pettiness and narrow materialistic egoism, dissimulation, and pride, that really I know of no reason why I should love them, even apart from the thousands of more or less painful pinpricks which they, with the best intentions in the world, have continually stuck under my skin. Of course, I know a number of exceptions among the Rusins, a number of personalities sincere and worthy of all esteem (I am speaking here of the intelligentsia, not of the peasantry), but these exceptions, alas!, only confirm the rule.

"I confess a still greater sin: I do not even love our Rus to such an extent as do, or pretend they do, our self-labelled patriots. What is there about it to love? To love it as a geographical conception? I am too great an enemy of empty phrases, and have seen too much of the world to proclaim that nowhere is there so much of nature's beauty as in our Rus. To love its history? I know it only too well, and I so ardently love the universal human ideals of justice, fraternity, and freedom as to be only too conscious of how few examples there are of real social spirit, real self-sacrifice, and real love for Rus in its history. No! it is very hard to love this history, when at every step one is moved to weep over it. Should I perhaps love Rus as a race? A race undisciplined, sentimental, a race without toughness and will power, with so little capacity for political life in its own borders, and so fruitful of renegades of every kind. Ought I to love the bright future of that Rus which I do not know and for which I can see no sound basis at all?

"Yet, nonetheless, I feel myself a Rusin, and when to the fullest extent of my powers I labor on behalf of Rus, I do it entirely devoid of reasons of a sentimental nature. I am motivated above all by a feeling of doglike duty and devotion. The son of Rusin peasants, nourished and brought up on the peasant's black bread won by the labor of sturdy peasant hands, I feel myself obligated to repay by the labor of a whole lifetime that which peasant hands spent in order that I might climb to the heights where it is light, where freedom exhales its perfumes, and where the ideals of humanity beam. My Rusin patriotism is not a sentiment, it is not a national pride, but a heavy yoke which fate has laid on my shoulders. I may protest, I may in my heart curse the fate which has laid this yoke on my shoulders, but I cannot throw it off, I cannot seek another fatherland, for then I should appear a base villain before the bar of my own conscience. And if there is anything that eases me in bearing the yoke, it is the sight of the Rusin people which, though oppressed, scorned, and demoralized through long centuries, and which today, poverty-stricken, helpless, and intimidated, is none the less slowly stirring and in ever-increasing circles is feeling a desire for light, truth, and justice, and is seeking its way thither. It is worthwhile, therefore, to labor for such a people, and no honest work spent on them will ever be in vain."

This "confession" naturally caused a great commotion in the community. It can be clearly seen at whom it was aimed. It came from one who, with few exceptions, had been in constant conflict with those who con-

sidered themselves the representatives of his community, the Nationalists and the Muscophiles, who had done so little to discharge the obligations of the patriotism they were so fond of vaunting. Of course it evoked a violent tempest of reproaches and accusations to which Franko replied in part by aphorisms in *Life and Word,* such for example, as the following: "Love is not obligatory, but the sense of obligation is obligatory"; "He who asserts that he loves his people, yet fulfills not his duty towards them, asserts a lie"; "Blind love, like blind faith, engenders fanaticism and intolerance." One of the poems which best represents the poet's mood during the furore aroused by his "confession" is the following, addressed to those who protested their patriotic love for Ukraine, and denounced Franko for emphasizing duty and obligation as its essence:

"Thou, brother, lovest Rus;
With me such love's not found—
Thou art a patriot,
While I'm a wretched hound!

Thou, brother, lovest Rus,
As thou dost love beefsteak;
But I do naught but bark
To keep Rus wide awake.

Thou, brother, lovest Rus,
As thou dost love good beer:
But can a toiler love
The drudgery he must share?

Thou lov'st the glorious past
Of Rus's history;
While my heart only bleeds
O'er all her misery.

Like cattle, house, and farm,
Thou, brother, lovest Rus;
With such *excessive* love,
I cannot love her thus."

While there was basic truth in the "confession," it must however be admitted that such a declaration, appearing in a Polish version during a period of strained Polish-Ukrainian relations, could not help but strike the community painfully. It was evidently occasioned by the trait of hastiness under stress, which was an unfortunate minor element in Franko's makeup. Fortunately however, the Ukrainian community had so far grown up that the entire incident soon blew over and left no serious effects behind it, and when the first impressions had passed, the whole affair was speedily forgotten. What contributed in no small measure to consign the whole event to oblivion was the appearance of another volume of Franko's poems, *My Emerald* (Miy Izmaragd), in the beginning of 1898. Many of the poems it contained helped to define and expound more clearly the essence of true patriotism as he conceived it. Furthermore, because of his total break with all Polish connections, he was able to devote all his strength to literature and science in Ukrainian. In this way, he disarmed his opponents, and from this time on he became more and more a popular

figure among all classes of the community and began to enjoy an ever-increasing recognition on the part of the nation as a whole.

My Emerald was different from his previous volumes of verse. For a long time—he had been gathering materials for it for fifteen years—he had desired to produce a volume of practical moral and ethical philosophy for his generation in the form of a collection of poems of various kinds, legends, parables, and didactic reflections on various aspects of human experience, such as; riches, poverty, work, prayer, wisdom, mercy, wrath, passion, love, beauty, friendship, gratitude, humility, joy, sorrow, death, and so on. The materials were drawn from a variety of sources, foreign, native, and original. It was inspired by and patterned on similar didactic collections which the old-time Ukrainian Church Fathers used to gather together in volumes and issue under the generic title of "Emerald." The opportunity for Franko to get out this long projected work came when he was overtaken by a sickness which rendered him incapable of other labor and compelled him to spend two months with half-closed eyes in a darkened room. The poems in the volume were truly *schmerzenskinder,* children of pain, as the writer called them. In his foreword he wrote: "It may be that my physical and spiritual condition is reflected in this book. In sickness one feels that one should be treated gently, mildly, and one's own state also tends to render one gentle, mild, and tolerant. It is then that one is overtaken by deep, tender feelings, feels the need of being loved, the desire to thank someone, to cling to

someone with confidence as a child to a parent. I do not know how far I have reflected these feelings in my book, but I do know that I wanted to make it a gentle teacher of morality throughout. . . . If from any of these poems there comes in the reader's heart a drop of kindness, of gentleness, of tolerance for the differing views and beliefs of others, yea, even for their errors, failures, and sins, then my work will not have been in vain."

Here it is no longer the ardent public leader who is speaking in *My Emerald,* but the poet whose soul is in perfect equilibrium, the preacher of love, truth, and righteousness, the teacher who desires to lead his fellows along the pathway of fraternity and humanitarianism. With this book the stormy year ended, and a new one began in peace and calmness as the poet moved towards the celebration of twenty-five years of his literary activity.

Chapter VI

AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POWERS

THE LEVEL OF a nation's culture is always signalized by the quality of its leading political, cultural, and literary reviews. They are eagerly read by the scholars, scientists, and literary workers of other peoples in order to estimate and gain an insight into the ideas and achievements of their neighbors. As yet the Galician Ukrainians could boast of no such organs as existed among other nations of Western Europe. The Ukrainian Renaissance was urgently in need of such a publication, and towards the end of 1897, the Shevchenko Scientific Society at Lviv was impelled to take steps to found and issue a periodical which would adequately represent the thought, aims, and achievements of the newly awakened community. In order to make the new periodical's appeal general and comprehensive an editorial committee was recruited from the various parties and schools of thought of the entire community. Franko was one of the members of this committee, and in January, 1898, the new monthly, the *Literary and Scientific Messenger* (Literaturno-Naukovy Vistnyk) made its appearance. This was a landmark in the history of Ukrainian culture, as a signal outcome of the national movement which had begun in a modest way some forty years before.

Although the editorial staff of the *Messenger* underwent many changes in the course of time, and especially when its headquarters were removed to Kiev in 1907, yet Franko was the actual editor and chief contributor during the first ten years of its existence. Every issue was crowded with his articles, stories, poems, translations, literary and critical reviews. He prepared the manuscripts of other contributors for the press, read and corrected the proofs. He was constantly on the lookout for new writers whom he encouraged, counselled and assisted, sparing no time or trouble on their behalf. It would be far too long a list to enumerate here all his works which appeared in the *Messenger* but among the most noteworthy may be mentioned the interpretative reviews he wrote about such foreign writers as: Zola, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Lilienkron, Conrad, and others. He also wrote acute and discerning appraisals of the work of such native writers as Lesya Ukrainka and Tobilevych, the "Ukrainian Molière," to name only a couple. For the *Messenger* he also wrote a series of articles on the political and literary history of Western Ukraine during the last three decades of the 19th century which later grew into the volume *Young Ukraine* (Moloda´ Ukraina) which gives an intimate picture from his point of view of that stormy period in which he played so important a role.

It was becoming manifest that everywhere the capable hand of Franko and the impact of his literary personality were sensibly felt in the entire field of literature among his compatriots, not only in its spirit, but also on

the material side associated with publication. In this same crowded year, capitalizing on the interest aroused by the Kotlyarevsky centennial, he took a leading part in organizing what became a most important publishing concern for the wider diffusion of Ukrainian literature. This was the well-known Ukrainian-Ruthenian Publishing Company, which began its activities in 1899. From its beginning till his death, a large number of Franko's works were first published by the concern. Among them were his translations and reissues of former translations of the masterpieces of foreign writers. From the English, the most noteworthy were his revised editions with introductions and notes of Kulish's translation of ten of Shakespeare's plays and Byron's *Childe Harold.* From this time on, practically all of Franko's work appeared either in the *Messenger* or was published by the company he helped to found.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that Franko, from 1898 on, began more and more to withdraw from political activity to devote his time and strength exclusively to literary and scientific work. He still continued, however, to work with the Radical Party and, what is more, in June, 1898, he stood as the party's candidate in the provincial elections. He failed of election by only a score of votes, and his defeat was largely due to the machinations of the government and the apathy of some who should have supported him but were not large-hearted enough to forget ancient animosities in the demands of unity for the common cause. As the culmination of a series of crises occasioned by the development of factions within the

party as described in the preceding chapter, Franko finally withdrew altogether from all partisan political activity. The step made a great impression at the time and evoked a varied response. By many his action was regretted, by some condemned, but on the other hand it was gradually recognized that it was for the best, and that Franko had become a personality who could well stand above all party affiliations and should be looked upon by the community as a whole as its common spiritual father and leader.

This growing feeling was given concrete form on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his literary and public activity which fell on September 31, 1898. A number of his friends decided to observe the event in a public manner. They formed a committee to celebrate Franko's literary jubilee, which turned out to be an impressive function and afforded the poet one of the brightest experiences of his life. A testimonial concert was held, followed by a banquet at which representative speakers emphasized the great debt that the Ukrainian people as a whole owed to Franko for his services in their development in the fields of literature, culture, and national consciousness. Greetings came by letter and telegraph from all parts of the province and from abroad. The speech in which Franko replied to these warm felicitations throws such a light on the man and his aims that it is worthwhile to quote in part. His first words were of thanks to those who had organized the celebration, and then he continued: "My thanks are also due to my opponents. During the twenty-five years of my activity fate

has bestowed them on me in no unsparing measure. They have spurred me on, never allowing me to settle down in one spot. Fully realizing the value of struggle as an aid to development, I am thankful for, and grateful to my opponents, and I sincerely esteem all those who have fought against me with honorable weapons.

"As I cast my eye over the present assembly. I am moved to ask myself: Why has such a large and brilliant company gathered here? I cannot think that it is all on my personal account. I do not consider myself so highly gifted, so great a hero, or such an exemplary character that my person should attract all men to myself. For twenty-five years I have been simply fulfilling the office of a baker who bakes and supplies bread for daily consumption. . . . I have always stood for the principle that our national development should be built up like a strong and mighty wall. The mason who builds a wall puts into it not only the finished granite blocks, but he also has to fill up the chinks and interstices with all sorts of chips and rubble, and apply cement to the whole. It may be that I have put into the wall a few finished blocks, but I am sure that the greater part of my work consists of the chips and cement I have contributed to fill in cracks and crevices to hold things together. . . . I know that little of my work will be remembered by coming generations, but for that I care not at all; I was simply concerned with the present needs of the moment.

"As the son of peasant folk, brought up on the peasant's coarse fare, I have always felt myself under an obligation to devote my life's work to the plain people.

Educated in a hard school, I early learned to apply two principles to myself. The first was a sense of the individual's personal responsibility, and the second was the necessity of unremitting toil. As a child, I perceived that our peasants gained nothing without hard labor; later, I recognized that the same holds true for us as a nation, and that we have nothing to hope for from anyone's grace or favor. Only that which we win by our own toil will ever really become our own property, and only that which we assimilate by our own strenuous labor from the cultures of other peoples can become a part of our own wealth. Therefore I have striven to acquaint our people with the best that others have produced in order that they might absorb it and thus make it their own. . . .

"I have always laid the utmost stress on the attainment of common human rights, for I know that in so doing, a people will best conquer national rights for itself. In all my activity I have desired to be regarded not so much as a scholar, a poet, a publicist, as to be, above all, a man. I have been reproached with scattering my interests, with jumping from one field of activity to another; yet this was the natural outcome of my chief desire—to be a man, an enlightened man, not to remain a stranger to any branch which constitutes a part of human life. . . . It may be that this lack of concentration has been harmful to me as a writer, but there will be need of such as I for a long time to come in order to arouse and quicken interest in things of the spirit and to amass materials, even though merely hewn out in the rough. Foundations are built in this manner, and it is only on

such foundations and from such walls that in due time a bold and splendid arch will rise. . . .

"There is no doubt that I have committed many a mistake in the course of my activity, but who is there who ever accomplished anything without making a mistake? Now I can look back over these errors with a tranquil spirit, for I know that they have served a useful purpose, both to myself and to others, as warning examples from which profitable lessons may be learned. As to myself, I have always held to this one thought: Let my name perish, but may the Rusin people flourish and prosper!"

This then is how Franko regarded his life, his public and social activity, and his work as a literary man and poet. It is true that not every element in the community had been represented in the celebration of his twenty-fifth jubilee, for some still stood aloof; however the public production of his monologue, *Festal Centennial* (Velyki Rokovyny) which took place immediately thereafter resulted in his full public recognition on the part of all his compatriots as their unofficial poet-laureate. This event took place on the occasion of the centennial celebration of the publication of Kotlyarevsky's *Eneida,* which has been already mentioned as signalizing the beginning of modern Ukrainian literature. A festival performance of Kotlyarevsky's operetta, *Natalka Poltavka,* as part of a three days' celebration in Lviv had been arranged. The operetta was preceded by Franko's monologue declaimed by an outstanding artist. We are told that the poem, assisted by an effective staging and chorus, had such an electrifying effect on the auditors that "it

seemed as though poet, performer, and audience were fused into one indivisible entity that nothing could ever more dissolve." From this time, Franko's life flowed on in full harmony with all of his people alike as they recognized his whole-souled patriotism and devotion to the common national cause. Henceforth no untoward incidents of any note disturbed the harmonious relationship of the poet with all classes of his fellow-Ukrainians.

For the next ten years, work after work flowed from his pen, all of which display the poet at the height of his powers. However, before passing to a mention of the most outstanding of these, it is worth noting here some personal details about the man as he appeared to those who knew him intimately in order to form some slight conception of his personality.

Somewhat like another, yet far greater warrior of the spirit, of whom his opponents said that while "his epistles were weighty," his outward appearance did not produce such a majestic effect, so Franko seems to have been in no way remarkable or striking outwardly at first sight to those who met him, but was rather unassuming and unobtrusive. Yet Father Volyansky, the parish priest in Kryvorivna, where Franko for years spent his summers and to which so large a number of other intellectual leaders also resorted that the place became known as Western Ukraine's "Little Athens," noted that "his face always wore an expression of deep and absorbing thoughtfulness, and in his eyes one could clearly read that beneath his high forehead his brain was incessantly at work brooding over the beginning of some new conception or the com-

pletion of a work already begun."

His manner was reserved and retiring except with his intimate friends. Dr. Okhrymovych records that "Franko did not care about being in 'company' so-called, never went to soirées, concerts, or dances. He disliked making new acquaintances and did not willingly enter into ordinary banal conversations. He was very reserved, not prone to giving confidences or talking about himself. He avoided taverns or restaurants with bars, but he did occasionally frequent one or two coffee houses for a glass of coffee and to look through the newspapers. But there he took care to avoid the other guests and kept to himself. At home, too, he did not care about receiving new visitors, but to those whom he knew he was very hospitable, regaling them with tea and biscuits and occasionally with a few glasses of mead. To such guests he would often read his latest poetical compositions before they went to press. . . . He did not care for alcoholic beverages, did not smoke or play cards, and did not like to be in the company of drinkers, smokers, or card-players. His only diversion was fishing, of which he was passionately fond. From time to time he would take trips into the country to fish well-known streams, and in his summer vacations this was his chief relaxation, either alone or in company with one or another of his friends." It is said that even during the affair of the heart with Olha Roshkevychivna, mentioned in chapter III, he would occasionally disappear from the student party to follow his favorite sport.

As a public speaker we are told that "he was not an

eloquent orator. He spoke in short, simple sentences, without superfluous phrases or rhetorical embellishments, without humbug or demagoguery, without false or exaggerated pathos, but always clearly and to the point. He never deviated from the subject he was discussing, and never made a display of his learning and scholarship, speaking always from deep conviction without duplicity or malice." Besides these, there were other traits of character he displayed, about which his friends have recorded many anecdotes. He always manifested a deep tenderness for children. On one occasion, coming home from a day's pleasure trip in a wagon with a friend, the latter's little boy fell asleep with his head in Franko's lap. "He covered up my boy with his own wrap and hummed a tender lullaby. That kind, quiet voice of his still echoes in my memory," wrote the father twenty years after Franko's voice had been stilled for ever. He was endowed with a vein of quiet, yet rich and subtle humor, which at times could "convulse his friends with laughter at his sallies, out of which he seemed to draw a great satisfaction at being able to amuse them to such a pitch." From all of these details, psychologists today would doubtless class Franko as an introvert personality, but if so, he was an introvert out of whose self-reservation there flowed a wealth of ideas and inspiration into the lives of others.

From 1898 on, all of Franko's literary work was marked by a calm and tranquil tone. It conveyed the impression that he had reviewed and analyzed all his past experiences and had come to a definite settlement of accounts with life itself. However, in his volume of verse,

From Days of Grief (Iz Dniv Zhurbi), 1900, there is, as the title indicates, a definitely minor tone prevalent in places, such as for example, where the poet declares that he had never been "truly happy," and that, although he had labored without ceasing, he felt that he had accomplished so little that he feared lest he might not be able to "sing out his poor song to the end." Sometimes there are expressions indicating a mood of spiritual depression when he speaks of former ideals having grown "pale and wan," and wonders whether it is worth while after all to continue fighting on behalf of such a "miserable, petty race as mankind." But these are merely reflections of passing moods, for in another place the poet feels that he is not yet old, that life

> "For me has not yet lost its gist,
> Tho' grief and woe oppress my soul,
> I am not yet a pessimist!"

The volume contains his great poem *Ivan Vyshensky,* one of his finest of the psychological-philosophical type, in which he deals with the inner relations of the individual soul to certain problems of life as he did in *The Death of Cain* and *Moses.* In this case the theme involves the claims and responsibilities of patriotism as opposed to a longing to seek a personal salvation alone through a course of rigid asceticism.

The same year also saw the publication in serial form in the *Messenger* of his novel *Crossed Paths* (Perekhresni Stezhky). This has for its background the changes which took place in the social and economic field during the

movement stirred by the Radical Party. The theme is the selfishness and shortsightedness of both landowners and peasants and the difficulties encountered by the pioneers in their self-sacrificing labors on behalf of long overdue reforms.

In 1905 appeared his masterpiece, *Moses* (Moysey), "his greatest achievement in the field of poetry, the strongest and most beautiful creation from the artistic point of view which Ukrainian literature has seen since the death of Shevchenko, a poem which is worthy of a place alongside the greatest productions of world literature." This was followed in 1906 by a volume of lyrics, *Semper Tiro,* a collection of poems dealing for the most part with fundamental social and humanistic questions, implying, as the title indicates, that the poet still considers himself a learner in such things. However, he no longer speaks in these poems as the ardent, enthusiastic, young warrior for truth and justice, but offers advice and counsel as a mature social leader, calm and balanced, who has long experience behind him and because of that experience discerns more clearly and feels more deeply the abuses and evils that must be banished.

During this decade, Franko also kept up a wide activity in the field of scholarship. In 1904 he gave a course of lectures on the history of Ukrainian literature from its earliest beginnings which he later published in a book, now recognized as an indispensable source book for students in this field. He wrote critical essays, reissued old classics furnished with extensive introductions and notes, collections of folklore materials, and translations from

many languages. All this work brought him well-merited recognition from academic circles outside his own country, so that next to Professor M. Hrushevsky, he became known as Ukraine's foremost scholar. The University of Kharkiv conferred on him an honorary doctorate, and there was considerable talk of making him an active fellow of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in the Russian capital then known as St. Petersburg. To crown these increasing distinctions, the committee of the foremost educational and cultural society of Western Ukraine, Prosvita, proposed at its annual meeting in 1908 that Franko be elected an honorary member and the society approved the recommendation with the utmost enthusiasm.

At the same time proposals were afoot to establish a Ukrainian University in Galicia. Franko began to take the necessary steps to be appointed to the chair of Slavonic Literature in the new institution. Once again, however, he was doomed to disappointment in his ambitions, this time not by men, but by another more inexorable force. He was smitten with a serious illness, which struck at the very roots of his physical and mental health and frustrated all his plans and expectations. He now began a long and stubborn battle with a constantly increasing malady, which in the midst of painful domestic conditions and unfavorable material circumstances dragged on for eight years until his death.

The signs of the coming breakdown had not passed unnoted. One of his close friends who had not seen him for a year or two previously, says: "I met Franko for the last time shortly before his serious illness. He was only

the ruin of the one-time strong man. He began to complain of his compatriots: 'I have been so taken advantage of, that I have lost all desire to live. I am getting worn out with the proof-reading of foreign works, correcting translations by translators who simply do not know their business. I have to do it because my livelihood is menaced. I'm going blind and deaf with such work.' I felt greatly concerned and grieved for him. Truly, Providence did not bestow Franko on the Ukrainian people for work such as this, proof-reading and correcting the errors of incapable translators. Then suddenly he said to me: 'When I was with you at Berezhany, I left some notes which are very valuable to me. Send them to me right away when you get back.' When I told him he had left nothing with me that I would not have sent him immediately, he said: 'No? Then I must certainly have left them with someone else, but I can't remember who it was.' These last words made a very painful impression on me. I could plainly see that all was not well with the poor fellow's mental health, that he was worn out with over-exertion and fatigue. Not long after that my worst fears were confirmed. Franko fell dangerously ill, smitten with partial paralysis."

Chapter VII

TRAGIC ILLNESS AND DEATH

THE BLOW WHICH fell on Franko was the beginning of a progressive paralysis, which with intermissions continued its relentless course until it brought about his death. The doctors declared that he could not survive more than a year, or two at the most, yet he waged a valiant struggle for eight years in all, and, in himself, gave a proof of the indomitable spirit which in his works he had tried to inspire in others. It was only the unconquerable will power and fortitude of the man, together with his habit of incessant work that enabled him to resist instead of sinking under the blow, and to labor on despite a desperate struggle with the body until he was finally overcome.

The tragedy was aggravated by the fact that after a long struggle for the elementary necessities of life, he was just entering on the phase where he and his family could count upon the enjoyment of a certain measure of modest comfort. His family was not a large one, for it consisted of his wife, a daughter and three sons. In contrast with the scanty and irregular earnings of previous years, the regular salary from the Shevchenko Society for his work on the *Messenger* and his income from the publishing company enabled him to feel independent, so much so that he was able to buy his own home in

1907. It is true, however, that the poet's home life had been by no means a bed of roses, for in addition to pecuniary difficulties, his wife's nervous affliction grew steadily worse and seriously interfered with the calm and quietness of mind so necessary to an intellectual worker and creative artist. However, by this time, Franko was no longer burdened with fears for his children's future, for all were now grown-up and established.

His illness broke up all the regularity of his former life. It was now a round of treatments, visits to hospitals and trips to health resorts from time to time. Finally as a result of the growing paralysis, he lost the use of both hands and had strange sensations, which he described sometimes in a manner which indicated mental disturbance, a fact which gave great concern to all his close friends. In company, for example, says one, "he would sometimes turn the conversation to religious topics, questions of the supernatural, the life beyond, and then, but only then, he would begin to 'wander,' and to talk in an abnormal manner. At such times he used to say that his ears had been opened to supernormal things, that he often held conversations with spirit beings, that he could at that very moment see and hear things which none of the rest of the company could either see or hear, that the night before he had talked to a spirit, Ivan Glova who had emigrated from Galicia to America, that on the roof of his (Franko's) house, he heard the spirit of Drahomaniv crying out every night, and so on. But when after a few moments of this, the conversation passed to scientific, literary, political, or other matters of the everyday

world, he talked with perfect sanity and without the slightest trace of abnormality."

During these trying years, he never in the least abandoned work; he wrote, translated, published. As far as the actual writing was concerned, when he lost the use of his hands, he dictated to his son, Andriy. When the latter died in 1913, he called upon chance acquaintances to assist him. When these failed at times, he scrawled his verse and prose with infinite effort in clumsy capital letters. The man gave the impression that something was driving him onward, as though he were in desperate haste to finish a task begun. He worked on new editions of old writings lest they might be forgotten, not only the products of his own youthful Muse, but also the works of foreign writers, such as Shakespeare, Goethe, Babylonian Hymns and Songs, Hesiod, and many others, all with extensive introductions and notes. Some never got beyond the planning, it is true, but none the less, to one unacquainted with the man's physical condition, it would seem absolutely impossible that what was actually turned out could by any stretch of the imagination be the work of a man with one foot already in the grave.

However, traces of his malady were occasionally observable in what he wrote. He made mention of it himself in the foreword in his volume, *Outline of Ukrainian-Rusin Literature,* published in 1910.

In 1913 all Western Ukraine celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Franko's literary activity. Jubilee celebrations were held not only in Lviv, but all over the province, in some of which Franko himself took part, giving

readings from his poems, and arousing the greatest enthusiasm among the people. The Shevchenko Society marked the occasion by granting him a regular pension for his support, while a committee at Lviv gathered and presented him with a jubilee gift of 30,000 crowns, a gift which stood him in good stead during the remaining years of his life.

However, World War I and the Russian occupation of Galicia caused much want and suffering to Franko (reports in Russian papers from Lviv said he was starving), yet he never relaxed his work. He wrote verses and published a collection of the most important articles he had written in foreign language periodicals from 1886-1890 under the title *Hiring out to the Neighbors* (V Naymakh u Susidiv).

But his health grew steadily worse. Left almost solitary, for his daughter had gone to Great Ukraine before the War, his sons were in the army and his wife in a sanatorium, Franko failed continually and he became weaker in his hold on life. In the autumn of 1915 it was evident that the end was not far off. But under the watchful care of doctors and friends he managed to survive the winter. Early in March, 1916, he made his will, bequeathing all his literary property, his library and correspondence to the Shevchenko Society. As to his house he expressed the desire that it should never pass into non-Ukrainian hands, and if his children wished to dispose of it, it should be to some institution for national cultural aims. On May 28, 1916, he closed his eyes for ever, preserving full consciousness to the very last.

The news of Franko's passing aroused a deep emotional response not only throughout Western Ukraine, but wherever the news penetrated to Ukrainians, whether in the far-flung battle zones, in exile in Siberia, or in the camps of prisoners of war. The Ukrainian newspapers came out with black-bordered pages and foreign newspapers in Poland, Germany, Russia and the Balkan countries carried articles, more or less full, giving accounts of his life and activity. His funeral was an impressive testimony to the place he held in the hearts of his compatriots. The Shevchenko Society took charge of all the arrangements and strove to surround them with all possible decorum and dignity. The funeral procession was enormous for there were over ten thousand people in the procession that escorted the body to the grave and the streets were packed with those who looked on in respectful sympathy. The services began at 5 o'clock in the afternoon of May 31, and it was 8 o'clock in the evening of a lovely spring day when the cemetery was reached. By the time the farewell speeches had been made the stars were looking down from a calm night on the newly filled grave. The crowds slowly separated as though the death of Franko in the midst of a dreadful war had burdened each participant with a feeling of grief and uncertainty for the fate of their native land. It was the general feeling that he had departed in the midst of the tempest all too soon.

How he stands in the estimation of his fellow-countrymen is probably best expressed in the words of Dr. Vernyvolya who, among other things, says: "A model

of unpretentiousness and fully conscious of what he could and what he could not do, a pattern of industry, one who never faltered before the meanest and lowliest task, Franko stands before us today in his full greatness as we survey his immense creative work. He seems like some energetic giant with sledge in hand, eternally toiling, and everywhere he goes new ideas are born, new life springs up behind him, and through it all we hear his mighty voice resounding . . . and of all his words, the one we hear the loudest is: 'Be a man, if only for a moment!' Coming generations will study Franko with greater eagerness than did his contemporaries, who seized upon every work of his as it came from the press. They devoured them, digested the ideas contained therein, and waited impatiently for new productions from his pen. What Franko meant for us—he who sometimes pulled our ears, and then again, like a father, welcomed us back to his embrace, we of an elder generation well know, but what he shall yet be—a happier future alone will prove. . . ."

That happier future for the sorely and tragically tried Ukrainian people has not yet come, but Franko's soul, like that of John Brown, who struck his first armed blow for the liberty of the Negro slave in our United States the same year that Franko saw the light in far-away Western Ukraine, is still marching on.

HYMN

This poem is clearly allied to the *Pioneers* in tone and spirit. It became the inspiration of the younger generation in working for the great change that came over Ukrainian society towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the first complete edition of his poems, Franko placed it at the beginning of the volume with the notation: "Instead of a Prologue." And we have followed his example as a keynote to his work.

HYMN

The eternal spirit of revolt,
The spirit which moves men to fight
For progress, liberty and right,
Still lives, nor has it shot its bolt.
The Inquisition's rack and boot,
The mercenaries trained to shoot,
The tyrant's guns and cannon balls,
The tsarist bans and prison walls,
The traitor and the spy — all they
Have failed to take its life away.

It is not dead — this very hour
'Tis more alive. Though it saw light
A thousand years since, yet in might
It onward moves by its own power.
In growing strength, without delay

It hastens where it sees the day.
It sounds a trumpet to awake
Mankind to follow in its wake,
And millions gladly join its train
Whene'er they hear that thrilling strain.

That spirit's voice is heard today
In huts of those who till the soil,
In factories where workers toil,
Where tears and misery hold sway.
And everywhere that voice resounds,
Men's tears are dried, their heart rebounds,
Misfortunes fade, new strength is born
To fight again. No more they mourn,
But strive to win a better fate
For children's sake, ere 'tis too late.

This living spirit of revolt,
Of progress, liberty and right,
Shall not retreat before the night,
Shall nevermore be brought to halt.
In ruins evil round us lies,
The avalanche's rush now dies —
In all the world there is no force
That can avail to stay its course,
That can put out the vital spark
We now see glimmering in the dark.
1880.

TWO EARLY SONNETS

These two sonnets were written while Franko was still a schoolboy, seventeen years of age. In the first one, the poet has in mind one of the many grave mounds or funeral barrows on the steppe beneath which lie the bones of those who fell in battle against the Tatars or other invaders. To him the ancient and anonymous folk songs represent the soul of his people with its perennial resurgence from the disasters of the past. The second one came as the result of his acquaintance with Kotlyarevsky's burlesque of Virgil's *Aeneid* which appeared in 1798. Its importance lies in the fact that Kotlyarevsky was the first writer in modern times to use the speech of the Ukrainian people as a literary medium and hence he is regarded as the father of modern Ukrainian literature.

FOLK SONG

Behold the spring which gushes from that grave
And gurgles o'er the steppe in tear-like stream!
On its clear surface doth the moonlight gleam,
The beaming sun plays on its crystal wave.
From out earth's bosom pulse those waters clear.
The living movement sleeps not, knows no bound.
The quickening waters spread new life around
To thousands of Spring's children growing there.
That spring with its unceasing magic flow
Is like my people's soul—though wrapped in grief,
It still sings to the heart of long ago.
As that spring's source lies in earth's hidden parts,
So from mysterious depths do folk songs rise
With their pure fervor to inflame our hearts.

KOTLYAREVSKY

A mighty eagle on a snowy height
Sat gazing all around with his keen eye,
When lo, he started upwards towards the sky
And on his splendid pinions took his flight.
His sweeping wing brushed off a clod of snow;
It fell and started other clods downhill;
They gathered force and strength and size until
An avalanche went roaring down below.
So Kotlyarevsky happily once spoke,
Began to sing in our Ukrainian tongue—
Though what he sang then seemed to be a joke,
Yet in it lay an earnest great and strong.
That spark did not die out amongst our folk,
But blazed and warmed us all ere long.
1873

THE HIRED HAND

This was written during Franko's second year at the university and in it appear the ideas which were repeated and expanded in later years. A son of the soil himself, the poet feels and understands better than anyone else the unenviable lot of the Ukrainian peasant economically and politically, but he also perceives the sources of survival that lie in the peasant's character and past history. On the basis of this he can foresee eventual victory and liberation. It is a fine expression of the poet's social consciousness and solidarity with the oppressed, the 'socialism' for which he was arbitrarily thrown into prison a year later.

THE HIRED HAND

He sings a mournful song, his hands upon the plough—
Hard labor on the soil
And want and strain have scored their furrows on his brow.
'Tis thus I see him toil.
In soul he's still a child although his head hangs down
Like greybeard's, old and weak,
For from the cradle he has lived 'neath fortune's frown,
His life but labor bleak.
Where'er his ploughshare passes, it turns the fertile earth
Upon the rolling field,
Which speedily will bring the waving rye to birth,
The soil its fruit will yield.
Why is he in a shirt of coarsest linen dressed,
Stuff of the poorest brand?
Why doth he like a beggar wear a tattered vest?
He's but a hired hand!
Born as a serving man, once magnified as free
By heroes of his folk,
In wretchedness with no escape, in misery,
He bows beneath the yoke.
To live, his life, his liberty, his strength he sells
Just for a crust of bread,
Which adds naught to his strength and scarce
his hunger quells
Nor straightens up his head.
He dumbly suffers as with mournful song he ploughs
A field which others reap.
His song's a friend to him, a friend which ne'er allows
Him all alone to weep.
His song's refreshing dew which a hot summer day,
Revives half-withered flowers.

His song is awful thunder which rolls on far away
While here the storm cloud lowers.
He bends and waits with longing when tempests storm above
Until their rage is done.
He loves the sacred soil as sons their mothers love,
As mother loves her son.
He cares not though his toil to alien hands may flow
And ne'er to him belong.
He cares not though the fruit of bloody sweat may go
To make his masters strong.
Let him but see the earth which his hands cultivate
A harvest bring to birth,
Though 'twill not be his hands that shall appropriate
God's blessing on the earth.

That hired hand's our folk which spends its sweat in streams
In toil on other's fields.
Though mocked and scorned by fate, it lives by childlike dreams,
With heart that never yields.
A better lot it waits throughout long centuries,
And still it waits in vain,
Surviving devastation, Tatar miseries,
And serfdom's toil and pain.
For in that heart, howe'er a bitter fate may mock,
Eternal hope still dwells,
As oftentimes from out a cliff of granite rock
A living fountain wells;
As in a golden haze, a magic fairy tale,
It sees its future gleam,
And day by day endures its gloomy, sore travail
Through one unending dream.

It has been saved alone beneath oppression's frown
By love unto the soil;
Though oftentimes its children have been beaten down,
Yet always they recoil.
That love of theirs is like the old-time man of might,
Unconquered son of earth,
Who, though o'erwhelmed, cast down, yet from the earth to fight,
Rose ever in rebirth.
Thus, caring not for whom, still singing, on they go
To plough the fertile soil,
Not caring that their lords, indifferent to their woe,
Still revel on their toil.

Plough on, plough on, O giant, though in chains
Of ignorance and toil!
Thy chains shall some day fall, the evil that remains
No more shall thee despoil!
E'en when by foes o'erwhelmed, not vainly hast thou sung
The spirit's moral power;
Not vain have been the tales told in thy people's tongue
Of victory's coming hour.
Thou shalt o'ercome in time the crusted ills of yore—
Then on thine own freed soil,
Thou shalt as owner plough, and so shalt be once more
The master of thy toil.
1876

THE PIONEERS

This poem is a manifesto of the social program which Franko conceived as a result of his experiences of imprisonment for sympathizing with socialist ideals. It is usually said that he drew his inspiration from a legend about a tribe transported by Alexander and settled in a barren plain locked in by inaccessible mountains out of which they managed to break into the world again. This may be partly true, but one of Franko's friends records that in 1878 the young poet was living on a street in Lviv which was being paved for the first time. Throughout the summer the sound of the stonebreakers' hammers and the thud of the pavers' rammers never ceased. "It was doubtless from seeing and hearing this day after day that Franko got the idea for the *Pioneers,*" wrote the friend. In any case, the twin ideas of liberation from an oppressive past and the laying down of a highway for future progress form the content of this poem which presents a program of sacrificial consecration on behalf of an enslaved humanity.

THE PIONEERS

I saw a vision strange. Stretched out before me lay
A measureless but barren, open plain. And I,
With iron chains on hands and feet, stood in array
Before a granite mount which rose up, towering high,
With other thousands—captives, fettered the
same way.

Deep lines of pain and grief were etched on every

Yet in the eyes of all the flame of love still burned.
The fetters clung to each with serpent-like embrace,
And every back was bent, each face was downwards turned,
For all seemed bowed beneath a burden of disgrace.

A mighty iron sledge I saw in every hand,
And sudden from the sky a voice like thunder burst:
"Break through this rock! Let neither cold nor heat withstand
Your toil! In spite of danger, hunger, cold, and thirst,
Stay not, for yours it is to smash this granite band!"

At this we all as one our sledges raised on high;
A thousand thundering blows crashed down upon the rock.
On every side we saw the shards of granite fly,
The rock crack off in blocks. With ceaseless, desperate shock,
We hammered on with strength that nothing could defy.

Like roaring cataract or battle's bloody din,
Our sledges kept on thudding with exhaustless might.
New footholds every moment we never failed to win.
Though many a one of us fell crippled in the fight,
We onward pressed, for naught could shake our discipline.

Yet each of us well knew he should no glory reap,
Nor would man's memory requite our toilsome pain,
That long before our seed along that road would sweep,
Ere we could break a path and make it smooth and plain,
Our bleaching bones would lie beside it in a heap.
face,

We had no thirst of glory in our hearts to slake,
For we were neither knights nor heroes seeking fame.
Mere slaves we were, but such as freely, gladly take
Their bonds as self-made slaves in freedom's glorious name
The pioneers who toil a new highway to break.

And all held firm belief that by our strength unfurled
We'd rend the prisoning rock, the granite wall defy;
That by our mortal strength, though we to death were hurled,
Yet after, with our bones, we'd pave a road whereby
New life and hope might come into this sorry world.

And every one knew too, that in the world we'd left
Behind us for these chains and sweat and toil forlorn,
Were mothers, sweethearts, weeping wives and little ones bereft,
And friends and enemies, who, pitying or in scorn,
Cursed us and our emprise and feared the dreadful cleft.

We knew it and at times, bowed down in sore distress,
Our hearts would almost fail as sweet remembrance came.
Yet neither tears nor pity nor great weariness
Nor curses ever made us falter in our aims—
No sledge dropped from our hands beneath the awful stress.

We march in close accord, for each the purpose owns
To form a brotherhood, each with a sledge in hand.
What though the world forgets, or even us disowns!

We'll rend that prisoning rock, we'll pave a broad
new strand!
New life shall come to man, though it come o'er
our bones!

1878

THE GREAT OUTBURST OF SONG

Far from silencing him, Franko's second imprisonment in 1880 seems only to have stimulated his poetic powers and urged him to give expression to them in a great outburst of lyricism. The themes were reflections of the impressions made on him by nature, burning protests against injustice, challenges to labor for human betterment, and expressions of fervent patriotism. The months of March, April and May were spent in Kolomiya Prison and it was here that much of his verse in 1880 was written. The dates appended to them give a clue to the poet's changes of mood and feeling during the period.

SPRING SONG

Old Winter marvelled much
To see the melting snow
And how the cracking ice
Set free the water's flow.

Old Winter wondered why
He felt no more so stout,
From whence the breezes came
Which spread a warmth about.

Old Winter marvelled much
Because each day the earth
Exhaled a sweeter smell
And brought new life to birth.

Old Winter marvelled much
To see, despite the snow,
That flowerets from the earth
Began their heads to show.

Old Winter fiercely blew,
Sent forth an icy blast,
And with a pall of snow
He tried to hold them fast.

The flowerets in alarm
Closed up as though in pain,
But when the squall had passed
They raised their heads again.

Old Winter marvelled more
That he could not prevail
E'en over tiny flowerets
To make his strength avail.
March 27, 1880

SPRING SCENE

The sun already shining strong
Is at its spring work on the soil,
And once again the rolling fields
Exact from men their sweat and toil.

Down in the clear and quiet stream
The silvery fishes sport and speed,
While over last year's stubble brown
The lean cows limp in search of feed.

The woods ring with the song of birds,
The cuckoo strikes his bell-like sound.
Along the road in his fine rig,
The tax-collector makes his round.
March 28, 1880

WHAT LIFE GAVE

I have not lived long in this world,
    Yet I have learned to take account
Of what I got from life—not much,
    But none the less, a fair amount.

It taught me to perceive the good,
    Gave me a glimpse of learning's wealth,
Put love for justice in my soul,
    Gave me two hands to work and health.

It gave me friendship, mutual love,
    Although not always strong and deep.
It said: "Go sow thy seed, although
    Thy hand may not the harvest reap."

It also gave me enemies
    Who cursed and persecuted me;
It gave me friends who yet were prone
    First their own interests to see.

Yet over all I value most
    The cup of unjust suffering
Life gave to me, that truth and light
    I might perhaps to others bring.
April 1, 1880

REMEMBRANCE

Into the sea of tears that violence
Hath long exacted, I have poured my own.
To rear the shrine built by man's sacrifice
For liberty, I too have brought a stone.

Then when, bought by the tears by millions shed,
There comes at length the day of liberty
And love and justice—in that shrine perhaps,
Some soul may graciously remember me.
April 2, 1880

SEMPER IDEM

Swim against the tide,
Press against the goad,
Dauntless unto death,
Bear thy heavy load.

Justice against force,
War to help the weak,
For a people cowed,
Liberty to speak.

None so far has forged
Sword for senseless hand
To destroy for aye
Freedom from the land.

There is yet no fire
Can consume in flame
Deeds by spirit wrought—
Only man's weak frame!
April 3, 1880

THE ENEMY

The folk are not our enemies,
Although they hound and persecute
And shut us up in prison cells
And mock us with loud hiss and hoot.

For what are they but like the stones
Which spring bursts from the river's bed
And which the river bears along
In torrents when its waters spread?

The evil lies not in the folk,
But in the unseen bonds which still
Entangle both the strong and weak
In mutual pain and deeds of ill.

A new Laocoon, snake bound,
The people fight in bondage wrapped.
Alas! when shall those dreadful bonds
Be from the giant's body snapped?
April 9, 1880

FORSAKEN

My fellows have forsaken me!
They all, whenever they draw near,
Pass on and look askance at me . . .
What is it that my fellows fear?

Amidst the noise of city streets
I wander like a beast forlorn.
My heart says in reproachful tones:
"Thou art accursed and hence their scorn."

I walk in loneliness 'mongst crowds,
All those I know pass on, they go—
My heart is bowed with heavy grief,
There's none with whom to share my woe.

Could I wash out this heavy woe
With bloody tears of pain again,
I'd gladly weep out all my blood
That naught should bar me from all men.
November 14, 1880.

WORK

As iron which possesses magic power
To draw another piece unto itself
Will lose its strength when left upon a shelf,
But grows when it is utilized each hour;
As inactivity will bring on rust,
And 'neath the rust its strength wanes unexpressed,
So is the heart by secret grief oppressed—
If it doth feed thereon, it turns to dust.
'Tis only work that can destroy the rust
Which eats the heart, which can preserve a trust
In better things to come, enable man to strive.
In work alone can man's strength be unfurled;
Naught else hath worth, for work keeps man alive.

1880

UKRAINE

The very title affixed to the two following poems shows the wide and lofty character of Franko's conception of patriotism compared to the narrow, selfish "Austro-Ruthenianism" of the majority of the Galician Ukrainian intelligentsia of his time. The second of the two poems soon became a national hymn among nationally minded followers of Franko and later was adopted by the whole community. It owed much of its popularity, first to the vigorous melody to which it was sung, and secondly, to the persecution it met with from the Polish authorities of the province.

MY LOVE

So lovely is she, for she shines
In loveliness, holy and pure.
Her face is aglow with sweet peace,
Sincerity, love so secure.

So beautiful is she, and yet
Misfortuned, for so much of ill
Hath passed over her that the pain
Is heard in her native songs still.

Yet having known her, can I help
But love her with all of my heart?
The best of my joys I would lose
If ever I should from her part.

And having loved her, can I help
But deep in my heart to engrave
Her glorious image and bear it,
Despite pain and grief, to the grave?

And how can such love contravene
That other love, sacred as this,
For all those who weep and sweat blood,
Enchained in their misery's abyss?

No! he who loves not all his kind,
As God sends to all sun and rain,
He cannot sincerely love thee,
O thou, my belovéd Ukraine!

June 27, 1880

NATIONAL HYMN

No longer, no longer should we
The Russian or Pole meekly serve!
Ukraine's ancient grievances lie in the past—
Ukraine doth our whole life deserve.

No longer, no longer should we
Shed blood for an alien throne,
Show love for a Tsar who oppresses our kin—
Let love be for Ukraine alone.

No longer, no longer should we
Endure in our homeland the blight
Of quarrels and strife. Let them perish and then
'Neath Ukraine's fair banner unite!

This hour much promises, so
In desperate struggle will we
E'en lay down our lives, if that honor and fame,
Dear Homeland, we may win for thee!

1880

CHRIST AND THE CROSS

Franko was no enemy of religion as he was so often painted by some clerical adversaries. In this poem, for which he was denounced from some pulpits, he is merely symbolizing the conflict between the older and the newer ideas. The central idea of the poem is that Christ on the cross is a symbol of the suffering of all mankind in the midst of its struggle, a struggle in which the stronger side does not hesitate to profit by "bands of lying fable" in order to frustrate the formation of ideas which would put an end to mankind's sufferings.

CHRIST AND THE CROSS

In the fields, beside the roadside,
Stands an ancient crucifix,
And thereon the Crucified One
Hung through all the years that passed.
But with time the nails grew rusty,
Blasts of wind beat on the cross,
Till the Christ that hung upon it
From its arms fell to the ground.
Straightway then, the friendly grasses,
Which grew round the cross's foot,
Joyfully in their embraces,
Gave the Christ a welcome soft.
And the columbines and violets
Blooming there amid the grass,
Wound themselves, a loving chaplet,
All about the fallen head.
Thus, on nature's living bosom,
Blood and wounds all washed away,
Bedded in the fragrant flowers,
There the Christ in peace reposed.

But some pious eyes observed it,
Pious hands disturbed His rest,
Who, with crossings, from the flowers
Lifted Him on high again.
And as they could find no new nails
To transfix the pierced hands,
They took bands of twisted wheat straw
And rebound Him to the cross.
So, devout but narrow bigots,
Seeing how in these our days
Down from Calvary's tree of suffering,
From vain worship of false gods,
Altar smoke and worn-out ritual,—
In a word, that from the cross
Christ comes down amongst the folk,
And so doing, man becoming,
Closer, nearer to us stands,
And by His example holy
Leads us on to bigger goals,—
Evermore they strive again
Christ far from the folk to lift
And with bands of lying fable
Bind him to the cross once more.

1880

THE YEARS OF POETIC SCARCITY

As a result of the boycott and the difficulties that Franko experienced in making a living with the pen after his second imprisonment and the great outburst of song which it seems to have stimulated at first, a change of mood came over him which is naturally reflected in the sparse poetical productiveness of the next years. The first two poems in the present group need no remark. However, in the *Duel,* the poet seems to be setting forth in symbolism the inner spiritual conflict he was conscious of in being compelled to labor for bread on journals to whose general principles he was at heart opposed. As to the one, *To A Young Friend,* we have an interesting note on Franko's method of utilizing his ideas. A friend records that he once saw Franko write a verse or two in a young lady's album beginning with the same lines as in the printed poem. When it appeared in print several years later, he recognized it as elaborated and enlarged, but this time addressed to a male friend, not to a girl. It is quite clear that the deep thought expressed as to the mission of the poet would have hardly found a place in full in a young lady's album. The final poem in this group is closely related to the preceding one as dealing with the theme of the inner life of the poet in achieving self-expression in his artistic productions.

FORGET NOT

Forget not, ne'er forget
The days of youth so bright.
On life's dark path they cast
A beam of radiant light.

The golden dreams of youth
Of love, of action bold,
Of pure impulse, of such
Be not ashamed, but hold.
They pass, and then in gloom
Thou'lt labor like the mole,
And callouses will come
Both on thy hands and soul.
He only, who can love,
Endure, whose blood can thrill,
Whom hope can always heal,
Whose courage naught can still,
Who grieves o'er man's defeat,
Rejoices when he wins—
He is a man complete.

Throughout thy life, perhaps,
'Twill not lie in thy power
To be such man complete—
Yet be one for an hour!

And then in evil days,
When grief makes thy heart sore,
When thy hopes pass away,
And feeling glows no more,
When from the broad highways
Where tides of life still sweep,
Thy way through bypaths leads,
Deserted, narrow, steep;

When cares compress the heart,
When thorns thy feet shall gall—
Thou wilt then life's springtime
With gratitude recall!
And those bright dreams shall then
A light on thy path bring.
Forget not, ne'er forget
The days of youth, of spring!

1882

AUTUMN WIND

O autumn wind! who o'er the trees dost moan
And weep, like mother sorrowing o'er a child;
Who drivest clouds in wild confusion piled,
As though thou wouldst sleep, winter, death dethrone;
Who in the deep ravines dost howl and whine;
Who tearest thatch from off the peasants' huts,
And withered leaves dost scatter from the ruts
And send them flying till they sink supine—
Long have I listened to thy mighty moan;
Well do I know why thou dost weep and groan.
Thou grievest for the flowers, the summer day.
O brother wind! When some day thou shalt see
Me old and withered, wilt thou weep for me,
Or grimly sweep all trace of me away?
1882

THE DUEL

The smoke rolled up in clouds. The cannon roared.
Like unseen serpents bullets hissed. Shells whined,
And as they burst, death and destruction poured.

The face of earth with bloody streams was lined.
Men's hearts pulsed with high courage for the fray.
A thousand hopes were lost in death entwined.

The proudest standards went down on that day,
Thrones fell that yesterday still seemed secure
Nor ever dreamed that they might feel dismay.

And in the ranks, in dread discomfiture,
With dust—begrimed, attenuated frame,
I also marched, our victory to assure.

Upon my cheeks there glowed a feverish flame,
A voice reproving spoke within my breast,
Yet on I marched, like traitor whipped by shame.

For I, a loyal subject like the rest,
Marched in obedience to authority,
Fulfilling duty at the state's behest.

I marched against the fierce hostility
Of those who on all thrones would wreak vile harm,
Who fain would put the torch to majesty.

Flood-like, we spread o'er fertile field and farm —
Naught but our troops where'er one turned the eye.
Somewhere, far off, we heard bells ring alarm.

A village burns. . . . The smoke rolls up on high . . .
The bugles blare and dissipate all thought . . .
Our pulses throb, our throats are parched and dry.

Directly to the foe we have been brought,
Through hazy smoke they loom indefinite,
Their ragged flags speak of grim battles fought.

In close formation, they stand opposite,
Fatigued, in wretched garb, yet without fright
Each holds his gun determined not to quit.

As sun rays dart to put the night to flight,
Or frightened birds flee from the hurricane,
So from their rifles spurts a leaden blight.

As whizzing hailstones slash the standing grain,
As furious tempests whip the falling snow,
Our answering volley mows them down amain.

"Hey, men, advance! Charge forward, strike a blow
Before they rally! Not a single one
Must get away who dares resistance show.

"No prisoners! Kill every mother's son!"
The general yelled to spur us to the fray.
Like wolves on sheep, we all began to run.

What then came over me, I cannot say;
A fit of shivering almost made me yield,
I saw not where I ran or stood that day.

I only know that on that bloody field
I stepped on bodies now beyond all aid
And trod on dreadful wounds still uncongealed.

I heard wild yells that in my hearing brayed,
Smoke seared my eyes and bullets whistled by,
While men rushed past who raved, or swore, or prayed.

In that wild rout naught could I clear descry,
Ears, eyes, and feet flashed by in turbulence,
As stinging swarms of angry bees might fly.

My hands seemed glued unto my rifle whence
A stream of bullets seemed to multiply
Like serpents spitting venomous violence.

"Death to the rebels!" from my breast the cry
Burst forth. Then, as though stabbed, I felt the gad
Of conscience — recognized the monstrous lie!

That very moment from that welter mad
There stepped a rebel, who was armed like me,
And in a blood-stained uniform was clad.

What's this? My fleshly double do I see?
Like me in every trait, eyes, mouth, and hair;
The very same, alike in each degree.

I stood there petrified. The bugles blare,
But yet I could not take my eyes off him,
I seemed to wait from him my fate to hear.

Fear, like a shroud of ice, wrapped every limb
In helplessness. I stood there as a bird
Is held by serpent fascination grim.

But he gazed at me calmly, undeterred
By what went on, then with reproach looked round
Upon the blood, the dead who no more stirred.

By his accusing gaze I stood there bound;
I felt my strength give way, my courage flee.
At last I cried: "Why dost thou me confound?

"Why standest thou there with the enemy?
Whence comes it that thou canst my gaze so claim
That I myself in thee can only see?"

He calmly said that Myron was his name,[1]
That he was born where I was, the same date,
The story of our schooldays was the same,

My own life story did he recreate.
" 'Tis false!" I cried. "This is a foul deceit,
For I am Myron! Thou dost simulate

"This form of mine and with my story cheat."
He smiled and said: "Go slow, my friend, beware!
Be not so swift to speak words indiscreet.

"Alike one name and history we share,
With this exception: I the true one am,
While thou a spectre art, a ghost of air,

Creation of disordered nerves and sham."
He said this calmly as a doctor might
Denote a sickness or prescribe a dram.

Then fear rose in my throat and gripped me tight.
Of name and form, of all that life implied,
Had I been stripped by this demonic sprite?

"Nay, thou thyself the phantom art!" I cried.
"What proof hast thou to show that thou art real?"
"The proof?" he said, " 'Tis this; thou hast denied

"The cause of freedom, for 'gainst this ideal
Thou fight'st today, while to the oppressed and weak
The true Myron was always staunch and leal.

1 **Myron:** a pen-name used by Franko in signing many of his early pieces.

"Revenge against the tyrant he would seek,
He'd stand up for the right. In death's despite,
The real Myron still for the truth would speak.

"Thou marchest 'neath a tyrant's flag to fight,
Men's blood thou sheddest in brutality,
Thou dost defile the name of Myron bright.

"Away! Melt back into that nullity
From whence thou camest forth! Renounce the name!
Myron will fight for sacred liberty!"

His words cut deep, and though I felt keen shame
And courage ebbed, I still my ground maintained
And raised my rifle to my cheek to aim.

My double laughed, derisive, unconstrained:
"So, phantom, thou wilt shoot? Now shalt thou learn
I fear no bullet by a spectre aimed.

"Here is my breast! Take aim, have no concern!
But if when thou hast shot I do not fall,
I have the right to shoot at thee in turn.

"And then, pierced by my consecrated ball,
This bullet that has dedicated been
To battles waged the slave to disenthrall —

"No more shall such false governments be seen,
The trickeries contrived by human art
With hate, oppression, and their obscene train."

Without a word I aimed straight at his heart
And shot. But no sound from my weapon came,
My double fell not, neither gave a start.

"Behold the emptiness of thy false claim!"
He said. "Thou hast assumed my form in vain.
Thou cam'st from nothing, back then to the same!"

He shot, and I fell dead amidst the slain.

1883.

TO A YOUNG FRIEND

Why is thy head sunk down in thoughtful pose,
Thy marble forehead resting on thy hand,
With eyes that seem to search an unseen strand
Which may for thee a happier lot disclose?
Why dost thou ponder on deep thoughts like those?
Dear heart, beware of all such trains of thought,
For thought like that with treachery is fraught.

At first 'twill seem as when the sun's bright ray
In spring doth gild the beauty of the day
Until thine eyes are ravished with the sight;
Like as a loved one shines in bride's array,
Like stars that glitter in the deep of night,
Like honey drawn from flowers by the bee —
Yet, if thou taste it, thou shalt feel a smart
Before unknown, that burns within thy heart —
Such thoughts can but prove treacherous to thee.

The sun's bright rays will be dissolved in flight,
The stars be sucked back in the abyss of night,
The lovely flowers be stained by passion's hue,
In bird songs will be heard the shriek of pain,
The coming storm be seen in skies of blue,
The secret griefs that lurk in joy's domain,
In pearls that on her neck the beauty wears
Thou'lt see the spots made by unhappy tears,
And all the youthful joys thou now dost feel,
Will soon in an unsparing frost congeal.

Ah, then those ruddy cheeks will lose their tint,
And that broad brow which now doth bear the print
Of fate's kind kiss, will lose its ivory sheen
And take on furrows made by strenuous days;
And that free open gaze, so blue and keen,
Will darken and grow dim—to thy amaze.
The path of thought is thorny, without end,
Each step will wound thy tender feet, my friend.
Dear heart, beware of all such trains of thought,
For thought like that with treachery is fraught.
1883

WHAT MAKES SONG LIVE?

Each of the songs I've sung
Took from my life a day,
'Twas something which I lived,
Not just a written lay.

Each line of every song
Was part of my own brain,
The thoughts, they were my nerves,
The sounds were my heart's pain.

What moved that soul of yours
Was my own heartfelt grief;
What throbbed within the song
Were tears which brought relief.

For this my soul is strung
Like strings upon a harp,
Each passing touch, each blow,
Wakes tones now sweet, now sharp.

It matters not what flows
Of good or ill therein—
In song there only lives
What life itself puts in.
1884

IDYL

This poem is considered by one Ukrainian critic and biographer of Franko as "on the whole, one of the finest things in our literature." As it was written the same year that Franko was married, it may perhaps owe its inspiration to the thoughts aroused by that event.

IDYL

Long years ago this was. Two children small
Were trudging bravely, hand in hand, along
A path that from their village led across
The lowland meadows, gay with flowers, under
The summer sun.
The elder was a boy
With ruddy cheeks, blond hair, and deep-blue eyes.
A stick he carried in one hand and 'neath
His arm, close hugged, a loaf of bread.
His ragged hat with flowers was adorned.
Yet 'twas the girl that led him on the way,
Though younger far. Her eyes, like thorn-buds black,
Glowed like two red-hot coals and glances swift
Darted at all around. Her plaited hair
Swayed like a mouse's tail. A tiny strand
Of ribbon red was twisted in the plait.
Some cooked potatoes in a kerchief tied
She swung, and underneath her arm she bore
Some sprays of green pea vine with pods thereon
Still hanging.

The boy somewhat unwilling
Seemed, and timid looks cast all about.
The little maid with ne'er a pause talked on,
And strove her comrade's courage to maintain.
"Aren't you ashamed! So big a boy as you,
And yet you want to cry! A boy, afraid!
Why should we be afraid? When I tell you
It's so, it must be true. Our grandmama
Would never tell us anything untrue.
Come see! It cannot be so very far.
Just to that place and then Dil is quite close.
Then up and up Mount Dil until we reach
The very top. And then we'll rest awhile,
And maybe not. Why should we rest at all,
When we're as close as that! We'll shout 'Hurrah!'
And with a rush we'll race right up to where
Those iron pillars are which hold aloft
The sky, and hide ourselves so quietly
Behind them till the evening shadows come.
And don't you dare to grumble, or to sulk,
Or shed a single tear! And then, when evening comes,
And Father Sun comes home to spend the night
And at the big gate knocks—as quietly
As mice, we'll just tiptoe behind him in.
Don't you remember what our grandma said?
He has a daughter, oh, so beautiful,
One never saw the like! She keeps the gate,
And lets her father in and out each day.
And she loves children just like us, more than
The whole wide world. But stern old Father Sun
Will ne'er let any in for fear that she
Might run away with them from him. But we
Will creep in after him as still as mice
And snatch her by the hand and run so fast,
He'll soon be left behind. Don't be afraid,

And don't you dare to cry! It's not so far,
And we are well provided for the way.
I'm sure that when we see her, the princess
Will give us anything we care to ask.
Say, what will you ask for?"
The little chap
Laid finger to his lip, then looked at her
And said: "Maybe a splendid hobby-horse."
"Ha, ha!" the maiden laughed in silvery tones.
"Well then, I'll ask her for a nice new hat."
"All right, you ask for what you like, but I—
I know what I shall ask."
"What is it, tell!"
"Oh no, I shall not tell."
"Tell me, or else
I'll start to cry!"
"All right, cry-baby, cry!
I'll go myself and leave you here alone."
"Why can't you tell me?"
"Stupid, don't you know
What grandmama told us? The sun princess
Has golden apples which she gives away.
And those who from her such a gift receive
Their whole life long shall strong and happy be
And marvelously beautiful besides.
But only girls can get these golden gifts."
"I want one, too!" the boy burst into tears.
"Don't cry, you silly! Ask, and I will try
To manage it somehow to get you one.
And when each one of us has got a gift,
We'll run straight home and never say a word
To anyone. You won't tell?"
"No. I won't."
"Remember, if you do, she'll take it back.
Agreed?"

"Yes," said the boy.
So on they went.
Since that day many years have passed, and far
Beyond all that their childish minds that day
Conceived, the path more and more longdrawn seems
That to the Sun's home leads. The earth, the sky,
The sun, in many an alternating change
The boy has seen. Yet in his comrade dear
No change, no alteration can he trace.
Her same heart-lifting speech and merry song,
Her hopefulness unquenchable, her smile,
Flow as a living stream that in the heart
Links yesterday, tomorrow, with today.
Nor has her goal changed with the passing years,
But only larger grown, more glorious.
Thus on they fare along the great highway
Which humankind still traces, meeting pain
And disillusion harsh, yet in their breasts
They guard their chiefest treasure, childlike hearts.
The fool, with pride inflated, rushes by
And mocks at them. The haughty magnate deigns
Them not a glance. But when some humble soul
Meets them, he slakes their thirst with water cool,
Or points them out some easier path, or else
Beneath his roof bids them to spend the night.
And so, still clasping each the other's hand,
Without a care or fear they onward march
In quiet joy to meet the setting sun.
1886

THE PASSING OF SERFDOM

The background of this long narrative poem lies in the conditions which immediately preceded the abolition of serfdom and feudal dues in the Austrian Empire in 1848. In Galicia the landowning nobility was Polish and the peasantry Ukrainian. The poem tells the story of the struggle between lord and peasant in a single village, but that village is representative of the whole. The narrative is put into the mouth of an aged peasant who is telling the story to his grandchildren. Opposed to the lord of the manor, Migucki, who compels his peasants to purchase the whiskey he makes and to patronize the tavern he rents to a Jew in order to keep the people debauched, the village priest stands out as the leader of his flock. He opens a school for the children and persuades the older ones to refrain from drinking and to take a pledge against the use of intoxicants. In revenge, Migucki orders the priest to do forced labor with the serfs. This is illegal, but the priest yields under compulsion and dies as a result of exposure to a bitter tempest and the strenuous work. Before dying, however, he prophesies the death of Migucki within a year's time and the end of his family's ownership of the estate. The peasants have a friend in the imperial commissar, an Austrian, who hates the Polish aristocracy. As a result of Migucki's refusal to obey the imperial mandate abolishing serfdom and feudal dues, and the brutal trick he plays on the commissar, he is arrested and taken to prison. From there he is released by the intercession of his own forgiving former serfs, but comes home a broken man. He

goes abroad in search of health but dies in foreign parts. Having mortgaged the estate in order to get funds to go abroad, his wife is compelled to sell the estate to the Jewish tavernkeeper. She goes away, no one knows where, and thus the dying priest's prophecy is fulfilled and so the poem ends. Two extracts are given here: one which describes the character and activity of the priest, and the other which records the decisive events of the final struggle.

From THE PASSING OF SERFDOM

Canto VI

The Old Village Priest

Our priest was old, a timid sort
Of man, one of the older school
Who learned his Mass by rote and rule,
And with the peasants lived and wrought
As they did, and with equal fear
The nobles' insolence did bear:
Saluted them with hand on breast,
And felt that from their haughty air,
He was no better than the rest.

The master, though he made no claim
To be of different faith, ne'er came
To church and took no part therein.
If anything occurred wherein
Both priest and master should agree,
Migucki said: "Come up and see
Me at the Hall, but not within."

The village priests had naught to do
But take care of their priestly task.
They owed no single feudal due
That landowners had right to ask.
They got their living from the soil,
By church fees and their own hard toil.

He surely never thought, did our
Old priest, not e'en in wildest dream,
That there could ever come the hour
In which to nobles' eyes he'd seem
To be a dread conspirator—
But wait!

A childless widower,
He'd lived amongst us many years
Until he set us by the ears
By taking up the teaching trade.
Though he but progress small had made
In learning, yet when now too old
For field work, he became so bold,
He said, that he a school would hold.

Without delay, our good old sage
Began to work upon his course.
In summer he taught out of doors,
In winter in his parsonage.
At first he did not even set
His pupils at the alphabet;
Whether because he was not sure
Of the extent of his own lore,
Or planned to work on his own line—
He knew that interest never fails
With stories and with fairy tales.
But chiefly to that shrine divine

Of Nature, where we all sojourn,
He sought the children's minds to turn.
At every step along the way
Of life he always seemed to find
Something of interest to say.
He knew just how to all to bind
A moral lesson that would be
A help to life and piety.
He knew how in each girl or boy
To stir the little soul; he brought
To wakefulness its slumbering thought,
Showed how its powers to employ—
The ragged urchins ran to greet
A teacher so benign and meek;
To him they came like lambs who seek
A watering place in summer's heat.
But there was something more than this
Which drew them to the parsonage.
'Twas not so much the lessons sage,
But rather that unwonted bliss
They felt the afternoons they spent
At table with much merriment,
When priest and they together sat
Like family in friendly chat
In which the smallest took a part.
The priest, like father to them all,
Would now and then a word let fall
About some task or household art.
The children laid these things to heart.
Accustomed as they were at home
To bear with hunger, filth, and cold,
To hear the "waker"[1] knock and scold
Each morning at the door: "Now come!

1 An official whose job it was to get the serfs out to work in the master's fields.

Get out, or else the stick!" And too,
Accustomed as they were to see
Their parent's endless misery,
To hear their sighs the whole day through—
Here in this home where there was song,
Where all was peaceful, calm, and bright,
Where harsh words never brought their blight,
Unconsciously their souls grew strong,
Their childish hearts became more light.
Then up from table they would stand,
And, after play, the priest would lead
Them out and teach them how to read
From willow twigs ranged on the sand
So they would learn how letters look.
Then next he'd take a well-worn book;
The children, crowding round, would gaze
Upon the page and with amaze
The letters they would recognize
And into words soon organize.

I do not know, but there are signs
That God for each a gift designs:
To one, a clear and vigorous mind,
Which rarely doth its equal find;
Some are with wingéd thoughts endowed,
Like eagle's flight, to pierce the cloud;
Some in that golden gift partake:
What eyes behold, the hand can make.
But what rare gift doth God impart
To those who thus can children teach?
There's but one answer I can reach;
'Tis love that plays the greater part.

A lot of teachers I have met,
And many I've laid eyes upon.

But never have I seen the one
Who could so much from children get
As our lamented pastor could.
I never shall forget the flood
Of joy we felt, when our own boys
One Easter, made us to rejoice
By chanting in the church the psalm,
Intoned the Epistle like one voice,
And did it all with practised calm.
The folk like bees began to buzz,
The women wept: "Never before
Was heard the like of this with us!
Just see our boys! One can be sure
Their porridge didn't go for naught!
The priest, how well he has them taught!"
And after church, in glad tumult,
All came together to consult
How they for this could demonstrate
Their thanks. But while still in debate,
A lackey sped with furious pace
To tell the master what took place.

Canto XV

Easter Eve, The Arrival of the Imperial Decree

That cursed winter passed at last,
The last of years of suffering.
Then Eastertide drew near, and fast;
Ere Passion Week in that same spring,
Had we begun to work the land,
And Easter Eve was now at hand—
The eve of what I'll ne'er forget,
The greatest Easter we had known.
The smallest detail I can yet
Remember plain. To me it's grown
To be like yesterday.

Ere yet
That morn the early frost had gone,
We, in our yards, were getting set
For all the field work to be done.
'Twas just about the time to eat
When we had got our stuff all straight.
"Get in and eat and don't be late!
Leave all your other work at home,
For all must to the common come!"
Thus came the order from our lord,
And none dare disobey that word.

We hastened indoors as we were
And ate of what had been prepared.
Then to the place we ran half-scared,
And found the rest all gathered there.
We brought our plows and other aids,
The women and the girls brought spades.
The herdboys, too, were gathered in
And to the plows were harnessed in
To serve as oxen. Then, in haste,
The men in long rows all were placed
Like ranks of soldiers on parade.
The overseer inspection made,
Called out our names, and told us now
Where each should work, with whom, and how.

When lo! a one-horse postchaise neat
Came dashing down the village street.
A constable dozed on the seat,
Quite undisturbed by jolt or jar.
Good Lord! Who's sitting in the car?
None other than the commissar!
A strange presentiment we felt
Which made our hearts within us melt,

As though we were about to hear
Some news, perhaps, which for us spelt
Good tidings, or more likely, fear!

Like us, the overseer, though
No coward, apprehensive stood
And muttered: "Only God can know
What this forebodes! Sure, nothing good
Can come of it."

When from the car
He saw us there, the commissar
Gave to the constable a blow
Which made the fellow start up so
He nearly made a swift descent
Down from his seat. He woke up, though,
And scratched his head. Then down he bent
And fumbled in the straw to seize
A something there. He fumbled there
Till he pulled out what seemed a cheese
Wrapped in a cloth. In awe and fear
We stared at him. He gave a spring
Down off his seat, and, with a string
Passed round his neck, turned it around
In front of him. He then unbound
The cloth and lo! a drum. He whirred
And beat a tattoo till the sound
O'er all the village rolled and stirred
The folk. They came at various pace,
With shouts, from cottage, garden, field,
To find out what was taking place.
A surging crowd that would not yield
Soon thronged around the chaise.

"Don't shout!
Be still!" the commissar cried out;
Then rose and from his pocket took
A paper with official look.
"It is my duty here to read
This proclamation, so give heed,
For this is from His Majesty."
And then in booming tones did he
Read it all through—in German, though.
The poor folk gaped, they did not know
A single word of what was read;
Yet here and there one bowed his head,
Or crossed himself, or lifted eye
To heaven above with heavy sigh.
The commissar the paper read
Unto the end, and then he said:
"You understand what you have heard?"

"Your worship, not a single word."

"Oh, stupid blockheads, don't you see?
I've just proclaimed your liberty!
From May the third, this year of grace,
This act all serfdom doth erase.
It means that from this very day
All feudal dues are done away.
No tithes nor corvées need you pay.
You understand?"

Still no reply.

"Now, blockheads, don't you understand?
You take this like a reprimand.
Why don't you 'Vivat Tsisar!' cry?"

Still silence. Then from out the folk
Our headman stepped, and bowing low
Before the commissar, thus spoke:
"Oh, sir, apologies we owe
For this reception cool. You know,
We scarce can credit it. Our lord
Told us we ne'er should see this hour,
That e'en the Tsisar had no power
To set us free, so he assured,
That only he could give the word."
"Oh, stupid peasants, don't you see,
He's talking for himself in this?
The Tsisar takes naught that is his,
And 'tis the Tsisar's policy
All proper damages to pay.
A Tsisar's servant dare not say
In his name that which is not true.
What means this seal I show to you?"

"We wish the Tsisar many years,
And may his glory never wane!
But we poor folk so much in vain
Have suffered and wept bitter tears,
That we much fear lest this time too,
We may deluded be. So you,
Kind sir, we humbly ask to go
With us up to the Hall, and show
That paper with the Tsisar's seal
Unto our lord. Read it all through
To him, and when he sees it's true,
We then will full assurance feel.
Then, for his generosity,
We'll give thanks to His Majesty,
And pledge ourselves with heart and hand
To serve him for the fatherland."

"That's good, old man, what you have said!
Let's go, so your late feudal head
May learn it too. Move on, ahead!"

Canto XVI

The Noble's Reception of the Commissar and the Imperial Decree

The master and his wife were out
Upon the terrace when we came
Into the courtyard, all aflame,
And filled the air with clamorous shout.
The commissar stalked on ahead,
The constable with hands outspread
Beat on the drum with all his might.
The mistress rose, her face turned white;
She stared around upon the crowd,
With hands clasped, frightened at the sight,
Then looked upon her husband proud,
Her manner full of sad reproof,
Who stood there facing us. In truth,
'Twas plain he was but little pleased
With this inrush. His wrath increased
Until he ground his teeth with rage
When he saw who led this outrage:
The commissar! So then the brute
Was still at large? What new astute
And crafty game was now afoot?

But to allay his lady's dread,
Our lord, with slow and measured tread,
Came from the terrace. Then he spoke
In threatening tones unto the folk:
"What do you here?" The words he spoke

With back turned to the commissar,
Pretending not to be aware
Of him. Whereon the drummer broke
Into a loud peal on his drum.
The ignored commissar flushed red
As fire. But ere our lord could come
To speech, he burst out first and said:
"By order of His Majesty!"
That he was irked, 'twas plain to see.
The master turned: "Ah, commissar!
Your visits have become quite rare.
Do you bring news for us today?
What does our gracious Tsisar say?"
"I hold the Tsisar's mandate here,
Decreed upon the seventeenth day
Of April in this self-same year.
In it, he doth hereby declare:
Tomorrow all serfs shall be free
From vassalage and dues. His land
Shall each one hold in simple fee;
And for the loss of serfs set free,
The nobles may the cost demand
From the Imperial Treasury.
This is His Majesty's command!"

"The deuce he does! And by what right?"
The master shouted as though stung.
"His Majesty! His gracious tongue
Hath spoken it! In our despite,
He grants our serfs their liberty?
This valiant breed to recompense
For their worth and fidelity,
He wills to do at our expense?
He takes from us that which all deem
Is ours by Heaven's will! A scheme,

Forsooth, a kindly scheme! 'Twould seem
He hopes in peasants' thanks to bask.
Shall we like fools meekly agree?
Like weaklings, shall we bow the knee?
One question only would I ask:
Is there one word in that mandate
About those peasants without shame,
Who tried our rights to violate?
About their deeds with torch and flame,
Their murders, ravishings, and brawls,
Their plunderings of nobles' halls?"

"Sir noble!" said the commissar,
"Compose yourself, you go too far!
Our Tsisar seeks what's fair and true,
And as to bygone politics,
This document has naught to do."

"With not a word of 'forty-six'?"

"Sir noble, you with your high words
Too ready seem. 'Twere best today
No more of 'forty-six' to say.
'Twas you yourselves, you Polish lords,
Who first shot down the serfs, poor folk!
Yourselves brought down the storm which broke
Upon your heads, as your just due.
Yes, noble sir! Had lords like you
But looked upon your serfs as men,
They never would have tried to do
You harm, but would have helped you then.
You never think of that at all.
You make their lives a constant hell,
Yet you as constantly rebel,
When your own selfish interests call.

But let the Tsisar justly try
To treat both lord and serf, the cry
Of confiscated rights you raise,
And swear the people him mislead.
Sir noble, you are wrong indeed!
The people know! They can appraise
The good and sound from what decays.
The people, sir, at heart are sound!
Your violence will be hurled back,
And when the wolves come prowling round
Our byres and sheepfolds to attack,
They'll faithful watchdogs find on guard,
Who'll teach them such a lesson hard
They'll ne'er forget it, I'll be bound!"

"By God! What times we live to see,
When you begin to praise the dogs!
But that's just like you demagogues.
Yet, sir, it rather seems to me
That you err mightily if you
Esteem them to be good and true.
A good hound knows his lord, indeed,
And truly serves him in his need,
And will defend him to the end.
These are not dogs, but just plain swine!
You don't believe? By God! I'll send
You to my kennels—you can read
That to my dogs! Then you'll divine
How much of that mandate they heed."
"Sir noble!" in alarm cried out
The commissar. To vindicate
Himself by force 'twas now too late!
Our lord's rage uncontrolled burst out.
He stamped and raved with furious cries,
His face enpurpled, while his eyes

Shot sparks of hate and purpose fell.
"To hell with him! Does he dare tell
Me what I'm not to do! I'll show
The filthy Schwab! Here, men, you take
And pack him off and headlong throw
Him in the kennels! Let him make
His blackguard speeches to my hounds!
(To us) To keep you within bounds,
The whip shall your bold spirits break!
Hey! Run and close the courtyard gate!
Bring out the whips! I'll castigate
These guests who love so much to prate!"
We stood there stunned. Ere we were 'ware,
The lackeys seized the commissar.
And then, to our astonishment,
Although he fought, they soon had won.
They dragged him off upon the run,
His coat-tails flapping as he went.

Canto XVII

The "Battle of the Dogs" and the Rescue of the Commissar

The master's kennels were well known,
For our lord was a sportsman keen,
And always at the hunts was seen.
Great sums of money had he thrown
Away on hounds. Out in the yard
The kennels for the dogs were hard
Beside the cattle sheds and round
There was a fence of wattles bound
With withes. A Bedlam it confined
Of hounds who barked and yelped and whined,
A hundred dogs of various strains,
Of different color, size, and choice,

Retrievers, bloodhounds, and borzois.
Some writhed and tugged upon their chains,
While others in their kennels slept.
Some played and growled, and others leaped
High up the fence and yelped and whined.
The keepers fed them every one
But thrice a day to keep them 'fined,'
More swiftly in the chase to run.
No one e'er dared them to caress,
Nor go inside the fence unless
Accompanied by old Yakum,
The whipper-in. Should any come
Near to the fence, that hungry rout
In dreadful clamor would burst out.
Small wonder then that when we heard
That insensate command to cast
Our friend among the dogs—that herd
Of savage beasts—we stood aghast.

But, grimly scowling, our lord gazed;
A clamor rose from out the pen
Where all the kennels were. And then
From thence a furious din was raised,
Sign that our lord's ferocious will
Had been obeyed! Would he then kill
The commissar by savage hounds?
The lackeys still stood all about
With stupid smirks. When lo! there sounds
A sudden, fearsome, anguished shout
That thrilled in every listening ear
And made our blood run cold with fear.
"For God's sake, help!" the cry arose,
And then ceased in a dreadful close.
But, swift as falls a shooting star,
"Save him!" we cried out like a shot.

"Come on, break down the fence! If not,
Those dogs will kill the commissar!"

How it was done, God only knows—
Like thunderbolt we rushed apace
With one accord straight to the place.
The earth vibrated 'neath the blows
Of thudding feet. A moment's stay,
And then the fence was torn away,
And, after but a brief delay,
We, in a furious battle hot,
Killed every hound upon the spot—
Loud shouts and curses, blows and growls,
The splintering wood, and piercing howls,
All mingling in a deafening roar
That smote the sky. Oh, nevermore,
May I see such a scene of gore!

And soon the tidings sped away
Through all Podolia and Pidhir
About the terrible affair,
When dogs were slain the very day
That news of freedom came; how we
Had christened our new liberty
With canine blood. Some mirthful folk
Looked on the matter as a joke.
Somewhere a scholar told the tale
About a dungeon-keep in France,
The Bastille called. Whom evil chance
Once brought in there, naught could avail
To set him free to see the light.
The folk rebelled and in a fight,
They took the place, razed it to earth.
For them, it marked the end of night,
The dawn of hope, and freedom's birth.

Some jesters seized upon this thing:
"We'll call it not Bastille," they said,
"But Battle of the Dogs, instead."
And then they'd make the rafters ring.
But we could see no merriment
At that grim time. We were intent
On but one thing: "The commissar!
Where is he? Where's that document
He brought to us from our Tsisar?"

The commissar no one could find,
Although we madly searched the place.
Had he been eaten, so no trace
Of our good friend was left behind?
At last, beneath a pile of straw,
Before a kennel, someone saw
A stir! We tore the stuff away
And lo! face downwards, there he lay—
His legs, at least. By then we saw
He'd managed just to crawl halfway
Into the kennel 'neath the straw.
But still he'd firmly held throughout
The paper which declared us free.
He trembled piteously, and we
Had much ado to get him out.
Sore shaken, he with pain got back
Upon his feet. The savage pack
Had torn his clothing into rags.
His body, too, was torn. Deep jags
And bloody scratches could be seen
In many a place. He sure had been
A dead man now, had he not tried
To find this place in which to hide,
And had not we ourselves brought aid,
And to the jest swift ending made

So wantonly by our lord played.

"Ach! Lead me to your master," said
The commissar with many a groan.
"He'll pay for this! He shall atone
For every scratch I bear today.
I'll show him how he'll have to pay!"

With painful steps he limped along
Supported by our young men strong;
At times he needs must halt for pain.
Ha, ha! This time our lord could see
That he'd been with his pranks too free,
That this would not blow o'er, that we
Would not go meekly home again.
He called his lackeys from the yard
Into the house and all doors barred;
Then, with a musket in his hand,
At open window, took his stand.
The commissar felt satisfied
Our lord would really nothing do,
So he drew near, and pointing to
His wounds on legs and arms, he cried:
"Old Polish hospitality,[1]

Do you call this? Barbarity,
I call it, and for this your jest
Today, I hereby you arrest!
Give up! Obey the law's behest!"

Our master's answer was to line
His gun on him as he drew near.
He yelled: "You see this musket here?
Get off my land, you Schwabian swine,
Or else a bullet swift shall tell
You how to find the road to hell!"

1 The Polish nobility were fond of vaunting their 'Old-time Polish Hospitality.'

The commissar, seeing the gun,
Forgot his wounds and jumped aside
To find a place where he could hide
From direct fire. When he had won
A place of vantage, then once more
He challenged our lord as before:
"You utter threats, Sir noble? So!
We'll add this to the crimes which grow
From your misdeed. I now proclaim
Once more that in the Tsisar's name,
I you arrest! Give up, be wise,
And thus your sentence minimize!"

"Ha, ha! Come here and take me then!"
The master cried in scorn and swore.
Then from the windows all his men
Stuck out their muskets. So, 'twas war!
A gust of fear through our hearts flew,
The commissar turned pale and drew
Back farther. What should he now do?
But now, thrust forward by the folk,
And in their name, our headman spoke:
"We ask permission, sir, to serve
Our Tsisar who's declared us free.
And as our lord has done amiss,
We offer herewith all our aid
To see his orders are obeyed—
Is that your will, my friends?"
"It is,
It is!" we all in answer cried.
"The recent years examples gave
How such beasts can be brought outside.
Bring wood and straw! They will not brave
The fire and smoke. They'll come out nice
And peaceful if we them entice."

The commissar at this turned white,
And trembling, fell upon his knees:
"Oh, friends!" he cried in anguished fright,
"Don't do this thing! For my sake, please!
For my sake! 'Tis your friend implores
You not to fire the house. Agree
To give up this fell plan of yours!
Leave him alone! You'll ruin me,
Unless from fire his house you save,
Else every squire will rant and rave:
'The commissar the order gave!'
But this thing do: keep watch to see
That he escapes not from his nest,
While I fetch troops him to arrest.
Don't ruin me! Go peacefully!
We'll overcome him legally."

We thought it o'er. All right, so be
It then. Such is the nobles' state,
E'en foes must save them from their fate!
"Now, sir, about our liberty?"

"You can't believe it yet?"
"God knows,
We've had so much, sir, to endure
From news that came too premature,
From disappointment's heavy blows,
That we must needs make doubly sure."

"O wretched land and wretched folk!"
The commissar sighed as he spoke:
"So many evils to have known
That blessings meet with unbelief!
Well, send direct some of your own
Head men down to the district chief

And see if I've not told you true.
But from now on, no feudal due
Your lord will ever ask of you."
"So be it then! Today we'll send
Our elders to him right away,"
We said, "and thus all doubts allay."
We washed and bandaged up our friend,
The commissar, and then set him
Back in his chaise, escorted him,
A happy, noisy multitude,
A little way. Then we renewed
Our promise to the commissar.
In silence we passed by the Hall,
But we set guards, who from afar
Could watch whatever might befall.

Canto XVIII

Easter Sunday, 1848

That Easter Day! Great God; so long
As we had lived on earth, had not
Such Easter fallen to our lot!
From dawn 'twas naught but laughter, song.
The village like an anthill swarmed
With folk. With gratitude all warmed
We thronged into the church. But when
We raised the Easter hymn, both men
And women burst out into tears
Until their sobbing shook the roof.
It seemed as though uncounted years
We had endured, put to the proof,
Till Christ should rise on our behoof.
Yet somehow, too, there came to birth
In all our souls a calm, bright peace,
So that we all, without surcease,

Felt ready to all heaven and earth
To shout and sing: "Hard times are gone!"
Old enmities were swept away,
And former foes embraced that day,
While still the bells pealed on and on.
The young folks ran about like mad
And cried aloud in accents glad."
"No more corvées! No master bad!
We're free, we're free, all of us free!"
And e'en the tiny tots in glee,
Like all the rest began to shout
And run like chickens all about.

And when the holy service ceased,
Out of the church the people poured—
There were some hundreds there at least—
Upon their knees, with one accord,
They all fell down, and then they raise
That grand, majestic hymn of praise:
'Laudamus Te.' At first the old,
Familiar strains like organ rolled,
The solemn words on high ascend,
But ere the anthem reached its end
'Twas lost in weeping uncontrolled.
My children! 'tis in vain for me
To try, e'en faintly, to portray
All that it was my lot to see
And hear on that most glorious day.
The people were insane with joy.
One old man skipped just like a boy.
There stood one fondling his lean team
And talking to them, it would seem,
As if he knew they'd understand.
And there some village maidens stand:
Each takes the kerchief from her head

And bowing, they with reverence spread
Them all before the ikonstead.
Each man greets other with a shout:
"Yes, Christ is risen! there's no doubt
That serfdom's gone to hell." And there
An old, old man with scant gray hair,
Upon an old grave, sunk and bare,
Lies prone as though he would comprise
The dust that lies beneath, and cries
With all his force: "O father, hear!
We're free! O father, hear, we're free!
For you a hundred years did lie
Beneath the yoke and would not die,
But vainly hoped for liberty!
We're free! Poor man, you could not stay
To see the light that's dawned today.
No lord my grandsons e'er will take
Like me, and of them lackeys make.
O father, call me if you can,
For now your son dies a free man!"

But, lo!, scarce had the priest got through
The blessing of the Easter cakes—
We hear a thudding noise that shakes
The earth. We see some men in blue
With shining buttons. In the air
Are gleaming bayonets, sharp and bare.
With measured thud their steps all fall
Obedient to the sergeant's call.
The troops! We hear the rattling drums
Like peas that spatter 'gainst a wall.
And then, great God! who's this that comes,
There in the midst, a prisoner?
Our lord, with fettered hands, his head
Sunk on his breast, dispirited,

Although he vainly strove to sneer.
We stood abashed. A rope behind
Was fastened to his hands confined
By handcuffs, while the other end
A soldier held as if to tend
Him like a steer to market place.
The commissar drove in his chaise
The last. He smiled as he drew near
The church. The peasants, half in fear,
And with amazement in their eyes,
Gazed at this staggering surprise,
Such an unwonted sight.

Then when
The little troop of armed men
Drew up with us, the commissar
Cried: "Sergeant, stop!" With sudden jar
The measured movement came to rest.
The commissar, with triumph crowned,
Saluted us who crowded round:
"Now can you yet believe you're free?
Now are you sure? Then God be blessed!
Well, here's your lord! I thought, maybe,
You'd like to say to him farewell
Before he goes away, and tell
Him how you wish to thank him for
His kindness. 'Twill be long before
You'll see him here again. He goes
Into a lodging safe where he
May drink the bitter cup of woes
He brewed for you as well as me."

As though struck dumb, we stood amazed,
Yet, mingling with the joy that dwelt
In all our hearts, a grief we felt

Come stealing in. We stood and gazed
In silence at our fettered lord,
All sunk in gloom as though he knew
He now with God's wrath had to do.
But not a single hostile word,
Or mocking word, or well-earned curse,
Came from the crowd. What use to jeer,
Or make the grievous fate still worse
Of him who stood defeated there?

We uttered not a word. Not so
The commissar. His wounds still pained,
His bandages were still blood-stained.
'Twas plain he meant to deal a blow
To make our lord pay for his jest.
'Twas clear it was at his behest,
That our lord thus was led on foot
Down through the street, with one man put
To hold the rope behind. So now
He turned and spoke with mocking bow:
"Mein Herr, these peasants, you'll allow,
Whom you esteemed as naught but swine,
Have shown to you a better face
Than you would do. In your disgrace,
With scoffs and jeers they do not join.
Against you they will not arise.
I read compassion in their eyes.
O people with a heart of gold!
But I, sir, do not with them hold.
Who treats me evil, I him worse.
A fool is he who will disburse
More than he has, or will appear
Much better than he is. I swear
That any man had best beware
How he wrongs me! Should he so do,

And fall into my hands, like you,
There'll be a bitter price to pay!"
Here our lord, like a beast at bay,
Lifted his head, looked round, and spat;
Then at the commissar he glared
With eyes in which such hatred flared
That he before it paled.

"You rat!
You cursed Schwabian carrion!
Is your foul tongue not withered yet?
Is there one torture you forget?
My wife's despair, prayers woe-begone,
Her last heart-broken cry when she
Was parted from me—can it be
These things don't satisfy your lust?
You sent her reeling in the dust—
Yet you're not worth one generous
True-hearted tear she shed. You swine!
You, who incite these other swine
To burn our homes and slaughter us!
My wife lies sick, and I . . . in bond.
Yet, gracious God, I'll not despond!
This trial will pass soon or late,
The prefect will me liberate.
God stronger is than Schwabian hate!"

The commissar let out a shout
Of laughter loud. "A pious mask
You've put on, Herr. Since when, I ask?
'Tis not long since that you shut out
These very peasants from the house
Of God. So much for pious vows!
Come on, we'll march! You shall have time
To see the prefect. There's no haste.

But first you're going to have a taste
Of common prison for your crime."
He turned and to the sergeant spoke,
Then into step the soldiers broke
And off they went.

"Good-bye to you,"
The commissar cried from his seat.
And to the thud of marching feet
And drums, our lord soon passed from view.

January-February, 1887.

THE DEATH OF CAIN

After publishing his translation from the English of Byron's *Cain,* Franko followed it up with his own deeply philosophical and symbolistic poem, *The Death of Cain.* In it he continues and develops some of Byron's ideas, but in his own original manner. He called his poem a 'legend,' and he describes Cain's experiences after having killed his brother Abel. Cain wanders for many years, his only companion his faithful sister-wife, who loyally followed him after his expulsion from the gates of Eden. When she finally dies, Cain buries her and continues his wanderings. But her death has shaken him and he begins to feel an unconquerable desire to look once more on Paradise, the first home of the human race. After incredible sufferings, which symbolize man's search for the true meaning and object of life, he finally reaches a high mountain from which he can gaze down into the Garden of Eden afar off. There he beholds two trees, each guarded by a beast symbolically related to the trees. One

is the Tree of Knowledge (reason, intellect); the other, the Tree of Life (emotion, feeling). He sees a swarm of shadowy human forms—a panorama of the future of the race—who crowd round the Tree of Knowledge, while very few seek the Tree of Life. At first he only sees the conflict between the thirst for knowledge and the longing for sensuous life. After long meditation, however, he comes to the conclusion that there need be no conflict between the two and that the solution for gaining happiness in life lies in harmonizing the two by love. Therefore, by love, man will find the true Paradise within himself. Filled with pity for his hapless descendants, he finds peace for his own hitherto divided soul, and by the discovery he is fired with enthusiasm to preach the new-found truth to those descendants who must be dwelling somewhere. In carrying out this mission he meets with death at the hands of Lamech, old and blind, who stands for the masses with their unreasoning prejudices. Such in brief is the outline of this beautiful poem which is adorned with a wealth of symbolism and allegory. By a few churchmen, Franko was harshly censured for presenting Cain other than he appears in the Bible, and some of the intelligentsia showed a remarkable obtuseness in grasping the aim of the poet. However, the passing years have brought with them an ever growing admiration for and appreciation of the work. The present selection begins when Cain, having surmounted all the difficulties of the search, is about to get a glimpse of the lost Paradise, the Garden of Eden.

From THE DEATH OF CAIN

At last one day, at eventide it was,
When Cain crawled to the very topmost peak—
A wretched skeleton, all scored with wounds,
Chilled to the bone itself and scarce alive,
He gathered up his ebbing strength and stood
Upon the icy top. The mighty blast
Blew through his locks, tore at his ragged garb,
And froze the blood within his veins. But Cain
Felt naught; all his remaining powers, his soul,
He centered in his eyes alone and sent
Their gaze into the distances remote,
Where far away in gleaming purple haze
Enveloped lay the 'garden of the Lord.'

And what did he behold therein?
A waste!
Some solitary trees alone, whose leaves
Sad murmuring made, and glorious flowers
Which hung on bruisèd stems. Apart from these,
No living thing, and not a sound was heard.
But no! There in the midst upon the sward,
Two soaring trees, magnificent, superb!
Ah, Cain knew well those trees from stories that
He from his father heard. There on the right,
The Tree of Life. A thunderbolt from heaven
Had shattered its fair crown, had riven all
Its trunk in twain down to the very roots,
Yet had not quite destroyed its power to live!
It still showed growth, still spread its branches forth,
New seed forever casting on the ground.
The Tree of Knowledge was the other one,
But all around its foot a snake was coiled;
The fruits of knowledge, good and evil both,
Hung on its branches. Plenteous were those fruits,

Alluring to the eye and to the taste.
A gust of wind came and, like falling hail,
The fruits fell down, but when they touched the ground
They instantly turned into cinder ash,
Consumed by fires that blazed and then went out.

Cain closer looked and in that rosy haze
He saw a swarm of light, transparent forms,
Like festal crowd. He peered—'twas people there!
By thousands, by the million, human folk,
Who, like a cloud of dust, gyrated, swayed,
And drove in endless, long drawn-out array.
They all around the Tree of Knowledge pressed,
They struggled, crowded, fell and rose again,
And fought to climb up high to seize the fruit,
Be it a single one, one apple from
The Tree of Knowledge. Streams of smoking blood
And seas of tears marked all the way—in vain!
Whoever set his teeth into a fruit,
It straightway turned to ashes on his lips,
First bursting into flame. And he who ate
Of that fell fruit became still more enraged,
Became more brutal to his fellow-man,
He murdered, butchered, put in chains the rest,
Tore down, in ruins laid what others built,
Put torch to it, destroyed with insane lust.

The Tree of Life, however, stood and grieved;
No one seemed drawn to it. Upon it hung
No fruitage great or luscious to the sight;
'Twas hidden in the leaves among the thorns
So that none eager seemed to come and taste.
Yet sometimes one, who broke from out the crowd,
Approached the tree, and having tasted once
Its wondrous fruit, began to call unto

The rest to come and follow him—but like
A flock of crows they all swarmed down on him,
And beat and tore and mutilated him.
As though he had committed grievous sin.

And lo! there were two beasts upon the sward.
And one beneath the Tree of Knowledge sat,
Enormous and immovable, austere.
It had a woman's face most beautiful
And body lionlike in form. Like moths
Attracted to a flame, the airy forms
Besieged the beast as though they questions asked.
Their faces bore the marks of grievous woe
And hellish pains, their shadowy figures shook.
With eyes and soul they hung upon the lips
Of that mute beast. It uttered not a sound,
Nor blinked an eye. Again a swarm pressed round
The Tree of Knowledge, where they battled, fought
To reach the fruit and eat—came back again
Unto the beast—but no response they found.
They seemed like autumn leaves pursued and blown
By hostile, persecuting blasts of wind.

The other beast sat 'neath the Tree of Life.
Its wings were like a bat's, its tail seemed like
A peacock's, it had eagle's claws, its form
Like a chameleon's, and a serpent's tongue.
It ever altered color, changed its pose,
Enticed all to itself to lure them from
The Tree of Life. However, all who put
Their dearest hopes upon the beast and rushed
Headlong to reach it, bruised their feet on stones,
Were pierced by thorns, and stopped by deep ravines.
Then with uplifted hands, they wildly hurled
Loud curses—not against the changeful beast,

But always at the Tree of Life: "Behold
The arrant cheat, the chimera, the lie!"
Their grievous clamor smote the phantom air.

Cain gazed upon the sight, and gazing, felt
As though a knife had cut him to the heart.
To him it seemed that all the grief, the pain,
The disillusionment of those poor folk
Were storming in his soul, squeezing his heart
As in a press, probing his inmost deeps.
He covered up his face in both his hands
And cried aloud: "Enough, enough, O God!
I wish no more to look upon this sight!"

Then suddenly the sun went down, the dark
Fell like a pall and covered Paradise;
Yet still the anguish in Cain's soul remained,
A supernatural, keen pain. He groaned,
And on that frigid, ice-bound spot sank down
And lay there like a corpse.
The biting cold
Awakened him. In heaven above, the sun
Beamed faintly down and shone with frosty smile,
Like hope that has been victimized, betrayed.
Where yesterday was Paradise, now hung
A thick, white mist which filled the atmosphere,
Like curtains from the sky. Cain did not grieve
That Paradise was hid. He only heard
An inner voice: "Away from here, away!"
And, like a thief who into some one's house
Has crept and then instead of booty rare
Finds that his hand has touched off an alarm—
So Cain sped downhill from the snowy peak,
And heavy thoughts, like vultures on their prey,
Swooped down on him and bore him company.

And thus he thought: "Hereby doth God delude
Us all from Adam down! For certainly,
Without His knowledge and His will, these things
Could not have been! For who has torn in twain
Both life and knowledge and has made of them
Accurséd enemies? Who else but He?
When side by side in Paradise He set
The Trees of Knowledge and of Life, before
He yet created Adam, did He not
Thereby appoint him and his seed to woe
And endless pain? For if this knowledge be
A foe to life, why then should man desire
To know? Why did not God make us like stones
Or foliage? If we were not to taste
The fruits of knowledge, why then plant the Tree
And lend its fruits such an entrancing charm?
If God designed that we should fully live,
Why did He not command us first to eat
Fruit from the Tree of Life?"

So, like the gull
Which screams above its young, and o'er the marsh
Low flying, strikes its breast against the reeds,
And then in flight wheels upwards to the sun,
And wails and screams the while it swoops and whirls—
Thus these consuming thoughts, devouring him,
Swept through Cain's mind in endless spirallings
With no solution found. He sat beside
A rock to rest, all wet with clammy sweat.
He let his eyelids fall and mentally
Recalled what he had seen. Once more his thoughts
A new turn took.
"What then can knowledge be?
Can it be really such a foe to life?
Yet so it seems—'Twas cursèd knowledge that

Aroused within my heart a fury 'gainst
My brother; this made me a murderer,
Because he, without thinking, foolishly,
Did all he could to turn me back into
His childlike path from which my eager soul
Had long ago emerged. This knowledge leads
Posterity to what? To slaughter beasts
And birds, their fellows too, ransack the earth
To find out only what and whom to kill?
For them, the hard and cutting stones they find
But suited seem for knife or spear or dart.
For this they tear the horns from stag and buck,
The teeth from other beasts, The woman[1] said
That they had found a certain kind of stone
Which in the fire dissolves as though 'twere wax,
And from it they have learned to make them knives
And spears and arrowheads more hard and sharp
Than those of flint. So here's where knowledge leads!
Blood, wounds, and death, these are its primal gifts!

"What then does this desire for knowledge mean?
That we desire death? Nay, that's not true!
Was it that I the death of Abel wished?
I wanted but to live my way—no more.
Does hunter merely wish the wild beast's death?
He wants to live, he needs the meat, that's all!
He wants to live, so must defend himself,
Lest he should be devoured. And he who first
A bow and arrows made, was his desire
Death to inflict alone? No, he desired
To live, contrived himself an aid to life!
So knowledge then is not desire for death,
Nor enemy to life! It leads to life!

1 Cain's sister-wife, who is described in the earlier part of the poem as occasionally leaving him to visit for a time with her relatives from whom Cain has been completely cut off because of the curse that is upon him.

It stabilizes life! Here's its intent!
The arrow which strikes down the bird is but
An instrument. The knife which kills is not
Itself the murderer. Knowledge, therefore,
Is not to blame. 'Tis neither good nor bad;
It only doth become or good or bad
According to the manner of its use.
But as to him who uses it? The one
Who holds it in his hands as archer holds
The bow? What then of him?"
Unused to thought,
The old man's mind, like sorely wounded bird,
Pulsated poignantly in darksome night,
Yet ne'er an answer to his questionings
In this direction found. His thoughts then took
Another turn.

"What is the Tree of Life?
What secret power lies hidden in its fruit?
Doth it in truth give immortality?
It doth not seem to do so! Those who there
In Paradise plucked of its fruit and ate,
Fell underneath the multitude's wild rage
And savage blows—they perished, so it seemed.
But did that fruit give naught to them? Ah, yes!
They went to death as to a marriage feast,
They perished with a smile, with mortal wounds;
In pain, they blessed their executioners.
What can it mean? It means that death for them
No terrors held. The spring of life welled in
Their souls. What is this spring?

"I saw as soon
As one plucked fruit from off the Tree of Life
And ate, he was transformed, a blessed peace

Possessed his soul, he raised his voice and called
To all to come to him; his bitterest foes
He kissed like dearest friends; he seemed to be
Like plaster lenitive of honey sweet
And pure which soothes and brings relief,
All penetrated by a holy sentiment,
That is; by feeling, all-embracing love—
Ah! That's the spring of life!"
Then Cain sprang up
Like startled animal, he looked all round
About him and he whispered as though dazed:
" 'Tis feeling, love! Can this be it, O God!
That in these two small words there may lie hid
A key to mysteries, to which no clue
The Tree of Knowledge gives, nor yet the beast
Beneath it tells? O wretched, wretched folk!
Why do ye strive and fight to reach that tree?
Why do ye wait an answer from the beast?
Look into your own heart and it will teach
You more than ye shall learn from tree or beast!
'Tis feeling, love! And those we find within!
Their mighty embryo dwells in each heart
Alive—if it is cherished, it will spring
And wax and bloom. That is: we have the spring
Of life within ourselves and do not need
To rush to Paradise to find it there.
O Thou great God! Why must this needs be so?
Was it a sport of Thine, as fathers with
Their children play, when out of Paradise
Thou drovest man, yet in his heart didst plant
A paradise to show us Thy true way?"

That moment Cain appeared as one transformed.
A strange and wondrous peace came flooding in
His soul. Forgotten were his sufferings!

The sun seemed warm, the earth grew radiant,
A rosy glow enveloped everything,
Like lovely maiden coming from the bath.
A moment's space, drunk with this happiness,
He was beside himself, he smote his breast,
He leaped, could not believe himself.
"Great God!
Can this be true? E'en in this heart of mine,
Corrupt and hard, insensitive as stone,
Doth there still dwell to germinate and flower
That seed of Paradise; affection, love?
Ah yes! I feel it! After these long years
Of life beneath Thy curse, I feel myself
Reborn, renewed. As icy film dissolves
In warmth, so hatred melts within my heart.
I feel a yearning pity for mankind,
Poor, wretched, blinded folk. I love them in
Their wilful blindness and their grievous woe
With vain impulses towards the good. What dread
And powerful temptations Thou, O God,
Hast spread before them, and how weak and frail
The nature Thou has given them! How poor
The knowledge which they cherish as a spark
And try to blow to flame! What is it worth?
Mists and enigmas lie in wait for them,
While still the path which leads straight to the heart,
To sincere, selfish love—the second beast
Has fenced it in, that swift-winged chimera,
Which lures men on and turns the brightest truth
Into a dream, an empty fantasy.
They pass away, as withered leaves are blown
By autumn winds. They hunt and massacre
Each other far more fiercely than the beasts.
They burrow in the earth, strive heaven to reach,
They cross the seas—beyond them hope to find

A Paradise of peace and happiness.
They seek for what already in their hearts
In mutual love alone is to be found.

"And must they still for ever wander thus?
Can it be possible they nevermore
Shall find that direct path? Has this unslaked,
Imperious desire been given in vain?
No, no! They but desire to live! And all
Have been endowed with mind to make
Distinction between life and death. So if
To them were shown the pathway unto life,
They sure would never walk the way to death.
Then I, myself, will show this way to them!
I, their forebear, to them will truth unveil,
The truth attained by age-long agony.
I'll fold them to my heart and I will teach
Them mutual love, persuade them to forsake
Their enmities, shedding each other's blood.
I, first of murderers, will thus my sin
Redeem by turning man from violence.
My people, children, all posterity!
Give up your tears for a lost Paradise!
I bring you it! The wisdom that I bring
Shall help you to attain it for yourselves,
To recreate lost Eden in your hearts!"

Such were Cain's thoughts, as with a hurried step,
His heart brimful of longing for his kind,
A love unquenchable in its deep warmth,
He went straight for the village. Now and then
He stumbled, had to stop to catch his breath,
But ever hastened on. His old heart throbbed
And fluttered like a bird's while to his mind
A throng of old, forgotten memories

Came rushing in, when from behind a hill,
A thin, blue cloud, he saw the smoke arise
From human habitations. Like a child,
He ran full speed right up the slope and stood
A long time on its crest to feast his eyes
Upon the sight he saw, a hundred times
More lovely than the glimpse of Paradise.

A superb landscape! In the background lay
A mighty sheet of water, looking like
A mirror, blue and crystalline. Its shores,
Adorned with rich, luxuriant green, thrust out
Long fingers far away into its depths
And seemed to plash therein or to admire
Their beauty pictured in the mirror clear.
And, near at hand, the hills, with forests clothed,
Divided, like a mighty girdling wall,
This tranquil spot from all the world.
And lo!
There in a quiet bay, some distance from
The shore, upon the water, like a flock
Of ducks, the village lay. Upon stout poles,
Plunged deep into the water's bed, there stood
Low cottages, wattled and thatched with reeds,
With jutting eaves, and all by bridges linked.
Smoke curled up from the roofs. The women in
The cottages to one another called.
Light skiffs plied to and fro upon the lake,
And fishermen were dragging heavy nets;
They shouted, pulled their oars, whilst in the sun
Their barbed harpoons reflected back the light.
And, opposite the village, on the shore,
There stretched a grassy sward on which a swarm—
But not of honey-bees or buzzing flies—
A swarm of village children played. The sun

Shone on their naked bodies, tanned and brown.
Their silvery voices rang, the light breeze blew
And tossed about their black and gleaming locks.
Some ran about full tilt while others played
Or skipped in circling dance. Another group
Were gathering shells along the water's edge,
And some there were who practiced with the bow
And tried their skill at targets, while the rest
Were gathered round an old greybeard who sat
Upon a stone and plucked a rude harp's strings,
The while he sang.
All this Cain saw as though
It were upon his palm; he wept and laughed
For sheerest joy. So long he had not seen
His kin! The sight of this, their peaceful life,
Their labors, their diversions and their play,
So marvellously beautiful appeared
To him that spell-bound on the spot he stood
And gazing with unwavering eye drank in
The sight that seemed earth's greatest happiness.
And then a cry arose among the boys:
One's bow string had been snapped. "Lamech, grandsire!
Repair my bow!" The old man ceased his song
And took the bow; he felt it with his hands
On every side, shaking his head in doubt
As he bent o'er the bow. At once it dawned
On Cain: the old man must be blind, of course!
And then the greybeard from his bosom took
A string, and having strung the bow anew,
He twanged it hard. The string gave out a tone
As clear as swallow's note. The old man thrilled:
"Eh, boys!" he cried and jumped up from his seat,
"Though I be old and blind to boot, I'm not
Afraid to try my archer's skill with you!"

"Ho, ho! Grandfather Lamech takes the bow!"
The boys in chorus yelled. "Bravo, grandsire!
Let us now see if thou canst hit the mark!"

"Where is the mark? Lead me to where ye boys
Have set it up!"

That moment, those who ran,
Perceived that Cain emerged and now drew near
Upon the grassy sward.

"Ah, woe is us!
A stranger, bandit, savage from the woods!
Grandfather, help!"

And, as a flock of chicks
Flee from the hawk, they all ran unto him.
Old Lamech quaked.

"The savage, where is he?"
He asked.
"He was behind the cedar there!
He's coming now towards us!"

Lamech spoke not
Another word, but laid an arrow new
Upon the bow—and shot.
"Stay, Lamech, stay!"
A voice rang out—"I am thy forebear, Cain!"
But as he spoke, the pointed arrow struck
And pierced him to the heart. Cain leaped up in
The air and then fell prone upon the earth,
The arrow head protruding from his back.
Convulsively his hands tore at the ground,
And then lay limp.

"Hurrah, grandsire Lamech!"
The boys cried out, but Lamech only shook
His head. Stock-still, as livid as a corpse,
He stood; he let the bow slip from his hand
Upon the ground.

"What's wrong with thee, grandsire?"
Alarmed, the boys began to cry, but scarce
Above a whisper, Lamech said: "What did
That savage say?"
"He said that he was Cain,
Thy forebear."
"Cain! how could that ever be?
My forebear Cain! O children, this would be
A fearful mischance if it should be true!
Let's run to him! Where did he fall?"
"He fell
Beside the cedar tree. He's lying still."
"Let's go to him, perhaps he's still alive.
O God, preserve us from this evil chance
That I should be the one to shed Cain's blood!"

Then stumbling, trembling like a leaf,
Old Lamech forward moved and after him
There came the crowd of boys. Though blind, he went
Directly to the spot where he had shot.
Again he stumbled, almost fell across
The corpse of Cain.

" 'Tis he, 'tis he, indeed!"
Old Lamech cried in anguished tones. "We're lost,
My children, lost! And all our tribe as well,
For all eternity! Cain has been slain,
And by my hand! Run, call your fathers here!
Call hither everyone!"

And while the boys
All ran to call their sires, old Lamech sat
Beside the corpse, and passed his hand across
Its face and touched the breast by arrow pierced,
And sang, as one might o'er a cradle sing,
An ancient song, with weak and quavering voice:
"Adah, Zillah, hear my song!
Hear God's voice against the wrong!
Whoe'er of Lamech mock shall make,
Revenge for that shall Lamech take,
Not once, but seven times.
But who the ban on Cain shall break,
God will on such His vengeance slake,
Not once, but seventy times." [2]
And without cease, like one insane, he sang
The song. Already all the village folk
Had gathered in alarm. They stood around
The murdered and the murderer aghast.
At last, as if awaking out of sleep,
Old Lamech raised his head, as though still dazed,
And said: "What, is there anyone with me?"

"We all are here, grandsire," the crowd replied.

"Then weep, my children! This is Cain, our sire!
Accursed of God because of fratricide,
And sevenfold the more accursed because
He neared our dwelling place and death received
From these cursed hands of mine. That death of his
Will bring God's judgment down on all of us,
And vengeance on your children and their seed.
Then weep, my children! Weep for your own selves!
And now this body, this accursèd corpse,
Without a hand laid on it, we must hide
So that it may God's world no more defile,

2 Genesis IV:23-24.

So that the sun no more may gaze on it,
Lest any beast devouring it, go mad,
Or bird which claws it, may not thereby die.
Bring stones and cast them on him, like a dog,
Heap them upon him, cover all with sand,
And fence it all around with thorns, and let
His resting place forever be accursed!"

Straightway with headlong haste, and savage cries,
The crowd began to hurl and pile up stones
Upon the corpse. But he lay like a child
In peaceful slumber lulled, with outstretched hands,
His face all luminous and calm, as though
Long after death, the glow of unquenched love
And joy unspeakable still lingered on.
But by degrees the corpse was lost to view
Beneath the stones. One stone cast purposely
Smashed in his face; the rest rained down and soon
He lay forever buried 'neath the cairn.
1889

From PRISON SONNETS

VISIONS

In prison dreadful visions visit me.
But are they merely visions, for they seem
More vivid and more solid than a dream,
So much of sleepless pain they cause to me?
The sorest pangs and tortures most refined
That ever man inflicted on his kind,
The martyred ones who bore them and who died—
These fill the prison cell where I abide.
They swarm about me, relay on relay:
The saintly heroes, brutal hirelings.
I see the martyrs' wounds as plain as day.

Those wounds resound like thunder in my soul:
"Thou art a part of all our sufferings,
Then let thy song our sufferings console!"

September 22, 1889

THE TWO GODDESSES

In sleep two goddesses appeared to me.
The face of one was glorious to see,
Her blue eyes seemed to speak of joys untold,
Her curling tresses had the glint of gold.
The other's face was partly veiled from sight,
But black eyes glittered like the lightning bright
'Gainst thunder clouds. Her gleaming raven hair
Made her like stormy summer morn appear.
"Weep not, O lonely one!" the lovely voice
Of that first goddess said: "Weep not, my child!
I bring a gift to make thy heart rejoice."
She handed me her gift, a sunflower fine;
The other drove a thorn deep in my flesh—
At once I knew that joy and pain were mine.

The first then said: "Behold me! I am love,
The sun of life which never sets above,
And like the flower which always seeks the sun,
So follow me until thy life be done.
Then shalt thou see the brighter side of things,
The world of beauty, all that therein sings.
The sordid and the vile shall scarce appear
As verities to vex thy eye and ear.
My gift will win thee many a noble heart,
The bravest and the worthiest of thy time.
In all that's good and great shalt thou have part.
Therefore, my child, guard well that which I give;
Make full place for it in thy heart and grow
In love for man as long as thou shalt live."

The other said: "Behold me! I am hate,
Sister to love, her ever-constant mate.
I hate oppression, inhumanity,
Contempt for others' rights and cruelty.
I hate that great injustice whereby men
Have driven their fellows back into the den
Of ignorance, where in its darkness grow
Servility, despair, all mankind's woe.
Man's heart is good, yet evil breeds its powers
In ignorance and in the social state
Which men erect, which also them devours.
Thou'lt feel my sting until the time comes when
Thy heart shall burn with hate, for only he
Who fights 'gainst evil loves his fellow men.

September 18, 1889

THE DOVE

A hermit was sitting by his lonely cell,
Far off in the heart of the primeval woods
Where nothing was heard but the voices of birds,
And murmurs of leaves as the wind rose and fell.
When lo! he looked upwards and there he descried
His sole friend returning, a snowy white dove,
Which he for two days had been mourning as lost.
The dove fluttered down, came to rest at his feet.
The hermit at once to the dove, where it stood,
Extended his hand to caress it, but stopped—
Those snowy white wings bore the stain of men's blood.
The holy man gasped: "What a curse on all things
There must be, when even a dove doth return
From dwellings of men with their blood on its wings!"

September 13, 1889

A LEGEND OF PILATE

So Pilate yielded Christ to their demands,
And saying: "I'm not guilty, ye have erred!"
Took water and in public washed his hands,
And then went home as though naught had occurred.
But this took place: as from a serpent dread,
All those who saw him in wild panic fled—
His slaves, his servants, e'en his men of might,
His soldiers fierce, were daunted by the sight.
Up to the roof he went, his wife to seek
Who was awaiting him, but with a shriek,
She jumped, crashed in the street and lay there dead.
His little child lay sleeping in its bed;
He gazed, it woke, its eyes were terrified
By what it saw; it gasped and straightway died.

Thus God marked Pilate with eternal stain,
Cursed him in soul and body, live or dead;
Far worse than Cain, who having Abel slain,
Washed not his hands, but owned his guilt and fled.
For he who had delivered righteousness
To violence, acknowledged not his blame;
Therefore he was deprived of every claim
To human worth, to love or happiness.
His family all vanished without trace,
Great Caesar banished him from pride of place,
In his own city found he no abode.
Infirm and old he sat beside the road
And begged for scraps with sad and piteous moans
Till hostile hands slew him with clods and stones.

Then someone dragged his corpse off by the feet,
And in a pit to bury it they tried.
When morning came it lay again outside;
The grave would not the cursèd thing secrete

And then they heaped a pile of wood well tarred,
And cast the corpse thereon and kindled flame.
The wood burned up—the corpse remained the same,
A pile of ashes, but the corpse unmarred.
A millstone then about his neck they tied,
And, binding hands and feet, into the sea
They cast the cursèd body carefully.
The ropes, however, burst and came untied,
And now the corpse of Pilate, cursed but free,
Still floats somewhere upon the open sea.

September 9, 1889

THE SONNET

In sonnets once did Dante and Petrarch,
Shakespeare, and Spenser, all of beauty sing.
In forms, like goblets of the highest mark,
They poured their love in phrases glittering.
The Germans forged those goblets into swords
When they expressed their patriotism stark.
Their "armored sonnets"[1] like their corporals bark,
The lust of blood and steel is in their words.
But what have peasants with such swords to do?
We need new weapons for our coming strife.
Our people's swords must be reforged anew
Into a plough—to till the future scene,
A sickle—to reap harvests for new life,
A fork—to make Augean stables clean.

September 24, 1889.

1 A reference to Rueckert, whose "Geharnischte Sonette" published in 1814 are full of warlike militarism.

From WITHERED LEAVES

THINE EYES

Thine eyes are like the deep, deep sea,
Calm and peaceful, shining bright;
In their depths my old-time sorrow,
Like a speck, sinks out of sight.

Thine eyes are like a deep, deep well,
To the bottom crystal clear;
And like a star in heaven's depths
Hope is shining there, my dear.

PRIDE

Ne'er pass by with scornful laugh,
Or with scoffing boast!
What you laugh at now, perhaps,
Holds what you need most.

Maybe that which you despise
Might bring happiness;
Maybe what you now condemn
Bears love's greatest bliss.

Maybe what with silvery laugh
You may scorn today,
As a bitter, sad reproof
Will in memory stay.

DESTINY

Ah, destiny! I utter no complaint.
My steps with loving wisdom thou dost lead;
For if the earth a harvest shall bring forth,
The plow must slay the flower with the weed.

The share relentless grinds deep through the sod,
And with a sigh, the flower breathes out its life.
The heart breaks, and with lips in silence pursed,
The soul swoons stricken in the mortal strife.

But thou dost follow and dost calmly cast
Into the broken clods and seeming death
New seeds to germinate within the soil,
And blow upon them thy life-giving breath.

NOON

Noon again.
The far-spreading unpeopled plain—
Wherever I turn, all around,
Not a sound!
Of man not a trace do I see,
Only grass like a billowy sea,
Pricked with flowers, deep green, changing shades,
And grasshoppers flit through its blades.

Without cease,
'Cross the river, a mirror of peace,
Up to the mountains' blue haze
Does my gaze
Move on till it sinks in the calm.
Perfumes drug my senses like balm,
The warmth lulls my soul in repose
Till I doze.

But listen!
Can that be a weeping I hear?
Yet rather a sigh it resembles,
It trembles.
Perhaps it is but my own pain,
My sick heart that's throbbing again.
Ah, no! From somewhere on the air
The notes of a pipe reach my ear.

And then
In sweet music my heart joined once more,
It wept quiet tears while the pipe bore
It along.
Thee, my bright star, it brought back once more;
And to the pipe which played an old air,
Deep in my heart, sweet, debonair,
Came my song.

THE PLANE TREE'S GREEN

The plane tree's green, the plane tree's green,
The willow's greener still;
Of all the maids, 'tis she alone
My eye and heart can fill.

The rose is red, the rose is red,
The loveliest flower of all;
The rose is naught, the rose is naught
When I her face recall.

The golden stars in heaven's deeps
Blink in the summer sky;
There's not a star, above, below,
Can match her brilliant eye.

Sonorous bells and silvery chimes
With music charm the air;
The melody of her sweet voice
Brings heaven very near.

The heaving ocean, mighty sea,
Whose marge no eye can see;
But in my heart is greater woe,
She's lost for aye to me.

THE CRANBERRY

"Cranberry crimson, why dost thou bend low?
Why dost thou bend low?
Lov'st thou not the light, the sun dost not know,
The sun dost not know?

"Art thou not afraid for thy buds' tender hue?
Thy buds' tender hue?
The storm dost thou fear, a bolt from the blue?
A bolt from the blue?"

"My buds they are strong, no storms me affright,
No storms me affright;
The sun is my friend, I'd bathe in his light,
I'd bathe in his light.

"Upwards to grow I've no strength to spend,
I've no strength to spend;
Therefore my branches I downwards must bend,
I downwards must bend.

"I cannot grow straight, for lo, thou hast spread,
O oak, thou hast spread
Above me like cloud thy shade overhead,
Thy shade overhead."

THE LITTLE DOVE

Ah, woe is me, alas!
I ache with bitter pain.
I let a little dove escape,
Which I can't catch again.

While she was nigh at hand
I never her allured,
But now I've lost her, in my heart
There's pain that can't be cured.

While she was nigh at hand,
I never gave it thought
That she so swiftly might depart
Where she could not be sought.

Yet when she flew away,
Came back no more to rest,
She'd carried with her in her flight
The heart from out my breast.

She carried off my dreams,
My hopes of happy hours,
As spring, departing, takes with her
The sweetest-smelling flowers.

THE LITTLE PATHWAY

Here is the little pathway
The maiden went along,
Who took from out my bosom
Its joyous, happy song.

Lo, this is where she sauntered,
Rejoicing as she went,
For with another lover
She talked in sweet content.

I followed in her footsteps,
Half-crazy in my mind,
And with my tears I watered
The dust she left behind.

Then, like a supple cornstalk
Which sways upon the air,
I glimpsed her for a moment,
As she was walking there.

And, as the diver fishes
The pearls from ocean's bed,
I hastily stole forward
And caught the words she said.

Alas! that little pathway,
It twists and winds along,
And twisted are my heartstrings,
Discords instead of song.

Deep down within my bosom
A dreary burden lay,
And life had lost all meaning
For me on that sad day.

All that I felt most precious,
The dearest thing of all,
On which my heart I nourished,
Was gone beyond recall. . . .

The thing which kept me joyous,
The thing which made me gay . . .
Oh, may that curséd pathway
Be swallowed up for aye!

AT THY WINDOW

If at thy window thou shouldst chance to hear at night
The sound of someone weeping, sobbing deep,
Oh, be not thou alarmed, do not rise up, my love,
To see what's there. Sleep on, belovèd, sleep!

'Twill be no orphan child who wails a mother lost,
Nor hungry beggar asking charity,
But my lorn soul 'twill be, with longings unconsoled,
The love I bear thee, weeping bitterly.

THE GILLYFLOWER

Though thou as flower wilt not win renown,
O modest, sweetly-smelling gillyflower,
Though thou in crowded life but seemst to drown
In dulling routine, languid, stagnant, sour,
Yet thou shalt always be to me a crown
Of loveliness to cheer a lonely hour.
A flower that's never known or frost or heat,
An ideal bright—because so far, and sweet.
I'll bear thee in my heart my whole life long,
All steeped in virgin charms of freshness sweet;
Thy beauty I'll transfuse into a song
Of sparkling eyes which radiate joy complete,
Of coral lips which sing both smooth and strong.
Just as a golden fly in amber set,
In quiet beauty there for aye doth shine,
So shalt thou live in this same song of mine.

WANING POWERS

Like ox 'neath the yoke, and day after day,
I drag on my plough towards the finish
No longer with power any flame to emit
From fires that now surely diminish.

The heart's youthful dreams now fade fast away,
The well-spring of fantasy's seeping;
My words have become both arid and dry,
'Tis time for the harvest's scant reaping.

Scant harvest! It may be my seed stock was poor,
Too little and sown without wisdom.
But time would not wait. The cold rains come on,
The stars prophesy a bleak autumn.

HYMN TO BUDDHA

All hail, Buddha, to thee!
The light of our dark life!
Thou miracle, thou world
Of peace in furious strife!

Majestic, placid, still,
Thou didst eradicate
The allurement of a throne,
The powers of love and hate.

Once king, as beggar, thou,
Great athlete of the soul,
Dost light a hemisphere
With thy bright aureole.

Thou didst a throne forsake
Thy soul to seek and find.
Thou didst all fetters break
To liberate man's mind.

Thou didst long years of pain
Upon thyself impose
To find the bitter root
Of all our human woes.

Thou foundest that the root
Concealed in man's heart lies,
Where passion has its springs,
Whence hopes delusive rise,

Where wrath spurts into flame,
Where love begins to call,
Where error weaves the net
To hold the soul in thrall,

And where the world lays hold
To plunge it into strife,
And draw it in Sansara,
The frantic whirl of life.

But thou from Passion's hell
Wert able man to save,
Not with vain hopes delude
Of bliss beyond the grave.

Naught is immortal save
Our bodies, for we know
No atom e'er decays,
Though ages come and go.

But that which in man throbs,
And burns, and weeps, and cries,
Perceives and knows, creates,
That longs, exults, and flies—

That dies out like a spark,
As waves their surging cease,
To sink into Nirvana
And find eternal peace.

All hail, Buddha! So say
All we who worship thee,
Who struggle in the toils
Of Passion's misery.

O Buddha! I greet thee,
Who am about to leap
From out Sansara's whirl
Into Nirvana's sleep.
1897

A PARABLE ABOUT LIFE

This is a specimen of the parables or allegories treating of various aspects of life and ethics which Franko included in his collection called *My Emerald.* They are fine examples of didactic poetry in which the poet-philosopher first paints a picture and then concludes with a few lines of reflection or admonition to point the moral of his teaching. This particular parable was adapted from a Buddhist source. In it, by allegory, the poet points out the weakness and frailty of the human body which may at any moment refuse its service, the many dangers which menace the life of man and then concludes by emphasizing that the only thing which sweetens existence is fraternal love, a theme which was paramount with him all his life.

A PARABLE ABOUT LIFE

In India 'twas. Across a lonely plain
A traveller toiled. Sudden, to his dismay,
A hungry lion he descried. At once,
Hearing its savage roar, though yet far off,
With terror-wingèd feet, he starts to flee.
But soon before him yawns a deep ravine
Which stays his headlong flight. No time to choose
Another course and nowhere can he hide—
The beast is at his heels. The poor wretch sees
That from the granite cliff which falls down sheer,
A slender birch had footing found within
A narrow cleft, and thrusting its green crown
Up towards the sun, high o'er the abyss grew there.
Without delay, in haste he sprang and clutched
The friendly tree. With desperate grip he clung

And swayed suspended o'er the awesome gulf.
Straightway, with dangling, searching feet he sought
Some foothold that he might his weight sustain.
This found, he easier breathed; his deathly fear
Began somewhat to pass. The hunted man
Then strove to look around and take account
Of where he was.
His first glance fell
Upon the spot where rooted stood the tree
Which was to him the only hope of life.
What grim mischance! There he beholds two mice,
One white, the other black; untiringly,
Laboriously, unceasingly, they gnaw
To cut the birch's clinging roots in twain.
With frantic paws they scratch the earth away,
And toil as though possessed, to undermine
The saving tree and with it him destroy.
A second stab of anguish pierced his heart,
For now upon the brink, the lion stood.
With ravening jaws he glared upon his prey,
His roaring made the echoing chasm ring.
Although he could not reach his prey, he glared
At him below and ramped and tore the earth,
And waited for his victim to return.
The man looked down into the cavernous depths
Of the abyss, and at the bottom sees
A dragon fierce, writhing expectantly,
Its dreadful maw stretched wide, attent until
The traveller should fall into its lair.
The man's head swam, his eyes their vision lost,
Fear gripped him at the heart, his limbs were bathed
In icy sweat profuse. And then he felt
That something stirred down where his feet were stayed.
He started, craned his neck to look and lo!
It was a serpent, coiled in sleep, that lay

Upon the ledge. Fain would he have cried out,
But horror choked the sound within his throat.
He tried to pray, but paralyzing fear
Slew every pious thought. Like rigid corpse,
He hung in space, certain alone that soon
The mice would gnaw the last root through, the snake
Would strike him in the feet, his strength would fail,
And he would fall into the dragon's maw.

But then, a marvel! Hanging on a branch
Above, the persecuted man perceived
A wild bees' nest. There, in the tiny comb,
Were still some drops of honey stored, the bees
Were far afield in quest of further sweets.
At once he felt a keen desire to taste
That honey sweet. Exerting all his strength,
He raised himself still higher till his lips
Could touch the comb and suck the precious drops.
Straightway it seemed as though a hand had rolled
All burdens from his heart. That sovereign sweet
Brought him forgetfulness of all his care.
The lion that o'erhead still raged and roared,
The mice that still kept gnawing at the roots,
The dragon that below still menaced him,
The serpent that was hissing at his feet—
All else, with these, were by the man forgot,
Filled by those drops of honey with a joy
Unspeakable, like that of Paradise.

The traveller, brethren, pictures all of us.
Our lives are hard, nature against us wars,
A thousand perils and mischances fell
Surround us, menacing from every hand:
Like him who hung o'er the abyss are we;
The ravening lion overhead is death;

Oblivion is the dragon down below
Which lies in wait to swallow all of us;
The mice, one black, one white, are night and day
That, alternating, eat away our lives;
The serpent which lies coiled up near the tree
Is this frail mortal body we possess,
Uncertain, sickly, weak, that in the hour
Of need may fail us in its service due;
The slender tree, in desperation clutched,
Whereby one hopes self-rescue to achieve,
Is humankind's remembrance, real but brief.
Escape we shall not find in this our plight
And no deliverance. One thing alone
Remains, one thing which neither direful fate
Nor fell mischance can ever snatch away:
It is fraternal love and brotherhood,
The saving honey, one small drop of which
Expands our human life to widest bounds,
Lifts and exalts the soul o'er all our fears,
Beyond the heritage of evils past,
Into those realms where light and freedom reign.

1898

FESTAL CENTENNIAL

This poem was written as a prologue to a gala performance of Kotlyarevsky's operetta, *Natalka Poltavka,* produced at Lviv in 1898 to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Eneida,* Kotlyarevsky's poetic parody imitated from Virgil's *Aeneid.* Kotlyarevsky's work was the first in modern times to be written in the vernacular and resulted in a revival of Ukrainian national consciousness. While he was still a boy, the last remnants of Ukrainian autonomy disappeared

in Great Ukraine with the destruction by the Russian government of the Sich, the headquarters of the once powerful Kozak Republic. In his burlesque Kotlyarevsky decided to depict Aeneas and his companions as Ukrainian Kozaks wandering about Europe in search of a new home after the destruction of the old. "The *Eneida* was a revelation to the Ukrainians. Here was a poem in the common vernacular glorifying the Kozaks. . . . It touched off the long hidden spark which most had regarded as extinct. Henceforth Ukraine had a written language understood by the people, and it was up to the people to write in it as well as to speak in it. The country and the people had the proof that their ordinary vernacular could be adapted to literature and that real books could be written in it."[1] Herein lies the significance of the commemoration for which Franko wrote this prologue. It was received with extraordinary enthusiasm and helped to make the occasion a memorable one. The first stanza is quoted from the opening of Kotlyarevsky's *Eneida,* and the last line and a half is from the Ukrainian national anthem.

FESTAL CENTENNIAL

The stage is completely dark, but in the distance is seen the glare of a great conflagration; in the foreground to the right is an ancient funeral mound.

1 Manning, "Ukrainian Literature," pp. 28, 30.

THE KOZAK-IMMORTAL

An old greybeard with a bandura is sitting on the mound. At first only the outline of his figure can be seen in the darkness as he gazes at the glare of the conflagration and recites dully and ironically:

"Aeneas was a lusty chap,
A better Kozak you'd ne'er find,
Cunning he was in desperate hap,
The boldest fellow of his kind.
For when the Greeks had fired Troy,
And nothing left they could destroy,
He buckled on his haversack
And, with a band of Trojans few,
All singed, a ragamuffin crew,
On burning Troy he turned his back."

He rises, straightens up, the bandura tinkling the while.

She's going up in flames! Our Troy-Ukraine
Is blazing, dying, blood drips from her heart.
Methinks this is her final hour of pain.
The enemy has won by cunning art!
Defenders slain who once the foe defied,
Her walls all broken down, and now the land,
The only shroud of those who for it died—
On that the foe has laid his ravening hand.

Nay, that's not all! For in our inmost part
The fire has raged as well; naught but dead coals
Remain therein, dead ashes is our heart.
The vital faith that once burned in our souls
Is quenched! Upon that awful pyre we smart,
Our innate strength consumed! Despair controls,
And bows our once proud foreheads to the ground.
O Mother, poor and childless, stripped, discrowned!

And we? What others deem a brand of shame,
We take as daily bread without offence!
What others 'traitor' call, we 'stupid' name;
What they call 'base,' we call 'expedience';
What others as 'unprincipled' acclaim,
We look upon as 'due obedience'!
Shame we no longer feel! Quite undistressed,
We calmly in our own abasement rest.

Distant thunder is heard, the conflagration draws nearer, the stage becomes lighter. The Kozak rises and points to the west:

Yes, there he is! That lusty Kozak youth
Who from his burning home himself did save.
He was a cunning fellow, in good sooth!
Let brethren perish in a fiery grave,
Let vultures tear a mother without ruth,
Let headsmen massacre the heroes brave—
His own Penates he's not left behind,
As now he seeks another home to find!

Thy dust, O Mother, he shook off his feet!
He left thee wounded, weltering in thy gore!
A natural heart from out his breast he tore,
Replaced it with a dog's, for life is sweet
To him. He bellows loudly: "Come, let's go!
Here dew will no more fall or grass regrow.
Our Mother's dead! Let's leave the body here
This very night and in the wide world fare!

"A better lot awaits, where meats abound
And fall all smoking hot, whene'er we'd dine!
Who seeks for pleasures, they're in Carthage found;
Who will his pockets with good ducats line,

Who wants to be a prince with glory crowned —
To Rome with me! There is our ark, our shrine!
What good are ruins? Let's forget Troy's name,
And on to Rome for wealth, and power, and fame!"

Thus off they went, the scorn of mankind all!
A Mother new they went to seek again.
They quenched the innate instinct that doth call
A dog to turn and seek his former den.
Puhu, Aeneas, hear! . . . 'Tis vain to bawl
And cry. . . . Then go, base-hearted men!
Go, show to all the nations thy disgrace,
Thy beggar's wallet and thy shameless face!

Meantime the scene becomes somewhat brighter so that villages in ruins from fire and the fields strewn with corpses become visible.

O sun! rise thou no more on our Ukraine!
Lest thou be frighted by this scene forlorn,
Let blindness come! From sight my eyes restrain,
That this grim picture may not, like a thorn,
Stab my old heart and there with hellish pain
Forever sting! But lo, a sound is borne!
An angel tolling for a nation's end?
Or else to rouse what still lives on? . . . But no!

The sound of a bell is heard in the distance.

An angel, yes! With diamond mallet stroke
He strikes upon the crystal vault of heaven.
Ah, how the sounds those ancient wounds evoke
Once more! This bloody welt was given
On Berestechko's field, and Chudniv broke
This bone of mine! This wound, for centuries
Unhealed, came from Andrusov's miseries!
And here, Poltava, and Tsar Peter's yoke![1]

1 The Kozak here personifies the Zaporozhian Republic and the names are the historical events which led to its destruction, first under Peter the Great and to the final extinction of its autonomy the time of Catherine II.

The sound of the bell becomes stronger, mingled with peals of thunder. It begins to grow dark again. The Kozak falls on his knees on the funeral mound.

Is this, O God, the ending of my song?
Ukraine is dead . . . grant that I, too, may die!
Grant that this body, tortured, oh so long,
At last, unfettered, in the grave may lie!
Oh, blot us from the memory of man,
That our seed ne'er our history may scan!
And thou, O God, forget us in Thy grace,
And level with the earth our resting place!

A blast of thunder. The Kozak sinks to the ground. The thunder rolls for a moment, then slowly the scene begins to brighten. In the east a ruddy glow is spreading, the sun is about to rise. The stage represents the same scene, but with green gardens and neat cottages. On the right can be seen the distant towers and cupolas of a city. Around the funeral mound luxuriant bushes of cranberry and wild cherry have grown, interspersed with gay flowers.

THE KOZAK-IMMORTAL

The same figure, but rejuvenated, comes out from behind the mound with his bandura. At first he walks gloomily, sunk in thought, but by degrees his movements become more energetic, his voice grows stronger:

I've soundly slept, I plainly see,
And, Kozak-like, a century.
Whether to win or lose I stand.
I'll look once more upon the world
And see Ukraine, my native land,

That Eden's beauties once unfurled,
That was the dearest spot on earth,
The blessed land which gave me birth.
I wonder who now rules o'er her,
And what the folk who dwell in her?
This newer generation's tongue—
What do they speak, what songs are sung?
O God, my heart is filled with fear!
It may be that no longer there
Dwell any who still speak our tongue,
Our ballads are no longer sung;
Perhaps the Kalmuck or Kirghiz
Roves o'er the steppes where sleep our kin;
The Chuvash, Mordvin, or the Finn
May dwell now in our villages.
Great God, why from that century's sleep
Didst Thou call on me to awake?
Was I aroused my heart to break,
Then back into the grave to creep?

He comes forward. Behind the scenes a chorus is heard; at first very softly, then growing louder all the time, but still as though coming from a distance.

"Hey there, Mother, hey!
See the Kozaks ride!
May good fortune them betide
As they fly away!

"As they ride so fleet
How the steppe resounds,
And the foe before them bounds
In complete defeat."

THE KOZAK-IMMORTAL

With an expression of utmost joy:

O God, I hear our mother tongue,
Our ancient songs still being sung!
The glorious memories of our nation
Still live in this new generation!
For still they sing of Kozak fame,
Their bloody fights they still acclaim—
Here's proof that my belovèd race
Is not yet locked in death's embrace.

He looks round at the landscape:

Another proof: these fields of grain,
These villages and gardens fair,
Bespeak folk of Ukrainian strain,
Fit chaplets for Ukraina's hair!
And lo, the burial mounds I see,
Beneath which sleep our chivalry!
Ukrainian maids with loving care
Still to those mounds with flowers repair!
Still for themselves Ukrainians reap
Their daily bread from this broad plain!
No stranger foot in our domain
Doth tread the soil where our dead sleep!

He comes still further forward and looks at the audience:

But lo, what miracle is this?
A mystery of mysteries!
Descendants of Aeneas, these?
But what a change has taken place!
The ones who thought it no disgrace

A hundred years ago to leave
Their burning home, and fled apace
A better fortune to achieve . . .
Now 'neath their Mother's wings once more
They have returned to pay their debt,
And in their native land have set
Their hands that Eden to restore.
And see, behold how their eyes glow
With that same flame of long ago
Which burned in ours, that sad night when
Bohdan, our captain, called his men,
The Zaporogs, to talk of war.
I see that night as 'twere today.
Around us Dnieper's sullen roar,
As the Devourer cast up spray,
And growling, gnawed his banks away.
There on the steppe facing the Sich,
And looking like a bird of prey,
The tyrant's camp loomed up to stretch
Its claws and rend us ere the day.
A tear gleamed in brave Bohdan's eye,
But fire flamed in his soul, his speech:
"Let's die, my brothers, or on high
Maintain the flag of liberty."
To perish—there's no other way—
Shall it be chains or in the fray?
He who doth hate a captive's chains,
The test of battle ne'er disdains!
Have ye your native strength still whole?
Are all your sabres blunt and dull?
Is all your knightly courage null,
Has it died out in your dead soul?"
And louder than the Dnieper's roar,
The Kozak host roared back and swore:
"We'll rout the foe before we'll yield,

Or leave our corpses on the field!"
Then in the yellow glare cast by
The flickering torches in the dark,
Ten thousand strong, there flashed a spark
In every Zaporozhian eye.
My brothers, 'twas those sparks began
The conflagration dread which ran
And spread as far as Bug and San.
Ten thousand living sparks that day
Changed Ukraine's history in the fray
And turned its course another way.
I see, I see those sparks again!
You say: "We are too few." Ah, nay!
In thirty millions it is plain
We can ten thousand find today.
You say: "Can we a Bohdan find?"
Let each prepare to take his share
When the great moment shall appear.
Make yourselves strong in heart and mind,
Try out your wings with all your might,
For when 'tis time for perilous flight,
Then from your efforts, as the sum
And crown of all, shall Bohdan come.
For that great moment let us all
Get ready for the trumpet call!
Each one a Bohdan may become
Whenever that due time may come.
You say: "We cannot fight that way."
Then forge new weapons for the fray!
Create new souls with courage braced!
But fight, spend not yourselves in sighs!
No more with evil temporize!
Fall, rather than your powers waste!
Stand proudly, do not bend the knee,
Better to die than traitor be!

Let each think that on him the state
Of millions rests, that for the fate
Of millions who are yet to live
He must some day an answer give.
Let each one say: "Here on this spot
Where I stand in the battle hot
Depends the outcome of the fight
In this great war for truth and right.
If I surrender or give way,
Or like a fickle shadow sway,
That which was bought at bloody cost
By others' labors may be lost."
Hold fast by thoughts like these and train
Your children's minds to think the same.
Provided that the seed be clean,
Good, wholesome harvests shall be seen.
"How long before we victory see?"
How long to wait?" Make no delay!
If you learn how to win today,
The morrow will bring victory.
Then not in vain shall we see rise
From slumber Ukraine's virile race;
And not in vain in their young eyes
Those old-time fires we shall trace.
Perhaps in their good, strong right hands
Will gleam and flash new shining brands.
Long have we been by woes bestead,
A grievous lot our souls doth try,
But let us shout: "Ukraine's not dead,
She's not yet dead, nor shall she die!"

1898

IVAN VYSHENSKY

This poem was the outcome of Franko's studies for the thesis he wrote for his doctorate in philosophy. His subject was Ivan Vyshensky, one of the mysterious figures in Ukrainian history. Very little is actually known about him. He was probably born about 1550 and died in the odor of sanctity about 1630. When he was about thirty-five years of age, following the ascetic traditions of the time, he visited Mount Athos, that remarkable monastic republic in the Aegean Sea where there was a large number of his fellow-countrymen living as hermits or as cloistered monks. He entered one of the orders and passed through the successive stages of novice, monk, and hermit, until at last he took the final step of being immured for ever. Before this final step, however, he had written a number of interesting "epistles" which he despatched to Ukraine, urging his countrymen to keep up the struggle for freedom. While a great patriot he was fettered by his antiquated and conservative ideas of the religious life, but his writings undoubtedly exercised a great influence in his day, all the more because of his reputation for saintliness. In 1605 he left Mount Athos for Ukraine but did not justify the expectations of the people in a practical manner. While his political writings from a distance warmed the people up to combat, his preaching of asceticism did not approve itself to the popular mind. His longing for the highest step of the ascetic life, namely: being immured for ever, drew him back to Mount Athos. Nothing is known with certainty as to his end, and the end which Franko assigns to him in the poem

grows naturally out of his aim in writing it. The present version has been somewhat condensed but the theme and the narrative remain complete.

IVAN VYSHENSKY

I

A pyramid of green it floats
Upon a heaving field of blue,
It lies upon the azure sea
Like an enormous emerald.

Thus laved by ocean's restless waves,
Beneath a cloudless, tender sky,
In beauty calm it rises up,
The slumbering isle of Mount Athos.

It slumbers? Nay, for nature there
Unceasingly is at her task
Of readornment, cherishing
The isle as mother does her child.

Below, from seething waves arise
Its ancient, gray, and time-worn cliffs
In proud defiance toward the sky,
Like ramparts inaccessible.

There round their feet a music wild
Ne'er for a moment intermits;
The waters crash against the rocks
And splash them with their silver spray.

Above, the mountain summits all
Are with primeval forests clothed;
The foliage forever hums
An endless mournful melody.

The holy mount forever dreams;
The days and nights float over it
As lightly as a rosy cloud;
No voice but nature's own is heard.

Although o'er all the mount are seen
Man's winding pathways, serpentine,
Yet never do they come to life
By sounds of laughter, talk, or song.

Although in places in the woods,
On mountain sides, in deep ravines,
Are monasteries, single cells,
Inhabited by living men,

Yet deepest silence reigns o'er all
These habitations where men dwell;
The seal of silence binds the lips
Of all the holy dwellers there.

Without a word they walk about
With solemn pace, all garbed in gray,
With withered frames and sunken cheeks,
Abstracted, other-worldly looks.

But three times daily o'er the mount
One hears the sound of clanging bells,
As though a flock of flying swans
Were waking echoes overhead.

The bells in mournful cadence toll
As though reproving those who dwell
In all this beauty, yet have turned
The isle into a place of gloom,

Who, of a nest for lofty thought,
A school to quicken high impulse,
Have turned it all into a tomb
In which to bury living men.

II

The bells are ringing on the Mount
The signal for the vesper prayer.
The great bell on the Priory
Sounds first and then the rest join in.

O'er all the mountain crests the peal
Rolls in metallic monody,
The rocks reëcho to the sound,
'Tis heard in cave and hermitage.

Deep sighs are uttered in response,
And withered figures cross themselves,
A quiet whisper breathes the words:
"Lord, grant Thy saints eternal rest!"

But see! Upon the rocky scarp
Of those tall cliffs which overhang
And gaze down on the dashing waves—
Can that be where the swallows nest?

No! Those are caverns hollowed out
In places inaccessible,
Retreats shaped in the living rock,
The haunts, perhaps, where sea-mews hide?

Not so! but cells where ascetics
May dwell who take the "final step,"
The living tombs with no return,
The strait gate to eternity.

A monk, who has as novice served,
And has obeyed monastic rule,
Then afterwards in solitude
Has lived the silent hermit's life,

And wishes to accomplish then
The ascetic's utmost exploit,
By fasting, silence, all alone
To listen to the inward voice,

And breaking every human tie,
And conquering every fleshly lust,
Feels in himself both strength and will
To gaze into the Eternal Eye—

Such, by permission of his prior,
May choose himself a cave to serve
Him as a living tomb from whence
He nevermore to life returns.

'Tis then the bells ring out a dirge,
And then o'er all the holy mount
The quiet whispers breathe the words:
"Lord, grant Thy saint eternal peace!"

III

The bells are ringing on the Mount.
'Tis Sabbath and the vesper hour.
The great bell on the Priory
Rings first and then the rest join in.

O'er every mountain peak the sound
Rolls in metallic monody,
The rocks give back the echoing tones,
'Tis heard in cave and hermitage.

The tolling ceased, yet on the breeze
The sound continued to vibrate,
While in Zographa's Priory
The creak of locks and bolts was heard.

The gloomy gates were opened wide,
And then from out the Priory
A solemn cortège marches forth,
Intoning a lugubrious chant.

The sacred banners wave o'erhead
Like flames of fire flashing bright,
A cross which bears the Crucified
Advances slowly in the lead.

And bearded monks walk on behind,
Arrayed in purple priestly robes,
Then after come more bearded monks,
But barefoot, wearing coarse gray gowns.

Among these walks a bent old man,
Greybearded, with a deep-lined face,
In sackcloth garbed, worn next his skin,
And carrying a beechwood cross.

A simple cross, carved out of beech. . . .
A breeze blows in from off the sea;
It plays upon the old grey beard,
Caressing both the beard and cross.

With hoarse and quavering voice he sings
In chorus with the chanting monks
The anthem with the sad response:
"Lord, grant Thy saints eternal rest!"

But now the holy cortège halts
And stands upon the very verge
Of one dread precipice whose depth
Strikes horror when one downward looks.

There halfway down upon the cliff
A speck is visible, as though
It was a marker placed to show
The halfway point 'twixt heaven and earth.

It is a cave, a living tomb
For hermit's use. God only knows
Whose hands once carved it out or when,
Or for what purpose and for whom!

No one with hands and feet could climb
Or reach it with a ladder's aid.
'Twas but by ropes let down in space
That man could reach it through the air.

There on the precipice's edge,
A groove, scored in the rock by ropes,
Alone gave sign that far below
There was a way to reach the cave.

The monkish train had halted here
To celebrate the funeral mass. . . .
Whose is the corpse they will inter?
Who is the sainted ascetic?

IV

The solemn service ends at last,
The final prayers have now been said,
Upon their knees with murmuring lips
The hermits and the monks remain.

The prior first gets to his feet,
And after him all rise in turn;
A solemn silence falls wherein
Naught but the roaring surf is heard.

The prior lifted up his voice
And spake unto the old greybeard,
Who, gripping tight his beechwood cross,
Stood there surrounded by the monks.

"O thou, who till this hour hast lived
As monk Ivan Vyshensky here,
From henceforth as a living man,
Thy name shall be no longer heard.

"Betake thyself, then, on thy way!
The cross thou holdest in thy hands,
Is all that we may give to thee—
Of other gifts thou hast no need.

"What thou shalt need of food and drink
To meet thy body's wants—each week
The manciple shall bring thee here
And let down to thy dwelling place.

"And now, farewell! Receive from me
This final kiss of brotherhood,
And may God grant that we ere long
Shall in His Kingdom meet again!"

The prior kissed the parting saint,
The monks and hermits silently
Kissed his thin hands, or reverently
The skirts of his rough garment touched.

The blustering wind came from the sea
And blew about in disarray
His old grey beard and hair as he
With cross in hand soon disappeared.

V

"I greet thee, my eternal home,
Calm haven after raging storm,
To which my soul these many years
With keen desire hath longed to come!

"The rock, which here envelops me,
Like faith, is firm, impregnable.
It is my fortress, my retreat,
My pillow, and my coverlet.

"This cross of beech, my only friend,
My comforter in times of grief,
Defender when temptations come,
And my support when death draws nigh.

"The azure sky which I behold,
Which fills the entrance to my cell,
Speaks of the hope that some day soon
My soul to heaven may wing its flight.

"The bright sun rising in the east,
Which for a space pours in my cell
A flood of gold and crimson light,
Recalls to mind the Holy Ghost,

"Who in ecstatic moments comes
To visit my poor, contrite soul
And blesses all its senses with
A flood of bliss ineffable.

"The deep-blue sea which over there
Now basks and glitters in the sun,
But here below beats on the rocks,
Now murmuring, now bellowing loud,

"Speaks to me of man's earthly life,
Alluring, peaceful, glittering,
When seen afar, but near at hand
So cruel, fierce, and grim appears.

"This is my world! The mutable
Has disappeared; the cries and shouts,
The noise of conflict in the world,
No more can penetrate this cell.

"All gone—the petty, painful cares
Which stir emotion in the soul
And turn the seeker's mind away
From fixity on God alone!"

So spoke the hermit to himself,
The man within his lonely cell,
Who yesterday Vyshensky was,
But now today is dead to all.

Then in a corner of his cave
He sat down on a stone, his back
Supported by the cold, stone wall,
And sank his head down on his knees.

Then nature's mighty harmony
O'erwhelmed the hermit's soul till he
Was carried by its ebb and flow,
Now up, now down, in reverie.

Betwixt the heaven and the earth,
Now up, now down, the ascetic's soul,
Sunk in the mystic's ecstasy,
Was cradled, lulled, and rocked in dreams.

(Immured in his living tomb, Vyshensky thinks he has broken every tie between him and life, but life still keeps sending its messengers to disturb his strivings for the mystic's ineffable union with God. First there are the doubts which continually come into his meditations and which cause fits of discouragement and despair. Finally some cherry blossoms drift into his cell. The sight of these starts a train of recollections of his native land, Ukraine, against which the old devotee struggles desperately).

IX

'Tis eventide. A shadow stretched
From out the cliffs athwart the sea,
Where, in the distance, tiny waves
With gold and crimson flashed and glowed.

From his high nest the hermit gazed
In peace upon the heaving sea;
Somewhere across those glittering waves
There was a path led far away,

A pathway to a distant strand,
O'er mountains and across wide plains
Until it reached Ukraine. In thought
He traced that pathway once again.

In thought he sends a greeting back,
A greeting full of love and grief,
A host of loving hopes and fears
Which long since he had deemed were dead.

When, lo! along that shining path,
A bark is slowly drawing near,
The gold and crimson on the sea
Are shattered by the dripping oars.

The warm, soft breeze that evening brings
Fills out the white sail of the bark,
And like a stately swan it glides
Straight onwards for the holy isle.

Was it some brethren coming back
From travel to a distant land
To beg for alms? Or could it be
Some merchants coming here for trade?

Perhaps it might be pilgrims, who
Had come to visit at a shrine
And pay their vows? Or messengers
Who came with news of grave events?

The old man followed with his eyes
The bark until 'twas lost to view
And disappeared behind the mole;
Then when 'twas gone, he heaved a sigh.

The hermit thought he had perceived
The coats of Kozaks in the bark
And sheepskin caps with crimson tops—
Ah, no! it must have been a dream.

X

Another night, another morn,
Another round of strenuous prayer,
Yet still the old man's soul was torn
By doubts and strange disquietude.

When suddenly, a rapping came
From someone signalling above,
As was the rule. Down in his cell
The hermit made a like response

And then suspended on a rope,
A basket with his food came down,
And in the basket whitely gleamed
A paper like a letter sealed.

The old man's hands began to shake;
The paper bore familiar words
And written in his native script;
He knew the image on the seal.

"Unto our holy eremite,
Ivan Vyshensky, in his cell
On Athos, where in solitude
He walks the path our Lord commands—

"The Orthodox Ukrainians,
Assembled in the town of Lutsk
For common counsel and advice,
Their greetings and petition send.

"To God we give most fervent thanks
For all the prayers of holy men,
For those who on themselves have laid
The burden of the Cross for us.

" 'Tis by God's mercy and His grace,
And by the saints who for us pray,
That we still stand firm in the faith
And have not yet abandoned hope.

"The council hath considered how
'Twere best in this tempestuous hour
To cast some small protection round
God's Holy Church and her defend.

"And so we herewith send to thee,
O reverend father Vyshensky,
Our deputies with this request:
Come back and guide the helm of state!

"Come back again to thy Ukraine,
Inflame our courage by thy words;
Be thou to us the shepherd's fire
That guards the sheepfold in the dark!

"O reverend father, 'neath the blows,
Our shoulders sag, our heads are bowed,
The poison of despair is fast
Infecting every fighter's soul.

"O hear thy Mother calling thee,
Ukraine, the land that gave thee birth!
Thy Motherland with tears calls for
Her best belovèd son to come!

"Do not contemn our humble prayer!
O haste thy Motherland to save!
Perchance thy wisdom and thy voice
May yet avail to save our land."

The letter bore these added words
Inscribed: "The Kozak deputies
Will come tomorrow for thy word;
Tomorrow they will come again."

XI

The hermit paced his narrow cell,
And with the cross clasped to his breast,
He calmly chants his stated prayers,
The letter banished from his mind.

The whole night had been spent in prayer,
His wrinkled cheeks all wet with tears;
He clung unto his beechwood cross
As child clings to its mother's breast,

But when the sun rose in the east,
He sat down fearfully to wait
Till he should hear the rapping give
The signal on the rock o'erhead.

At last the muffled rapping came,
The old man gave a sudden start,
But not a hand did he stretch forth
To give an answer to the call.

XII

Then evening came. The shadow lay
Stretched like a carpet on the waves
While from behind the mount the sun
Sent its last rays across the sea.

The rays obliquely fell and made
A golden pathway o'er the sea
From Athos where its waters beat
Unto the setting sun itself.

And in the entrance to his cave,
With shoulders bent, the hermit sits
And cons the letter o'er and o'er
And spots it with his falling tears.

"O hear thy Mother calling thee,
Ukraine, the land that gave thee birth!
Thy Motherland with tears calls for
Her best belovèd son to come!"

Beloved son! Can 'son' be called
A man, who in the darkest hour,
When foes assail and courage droops,
Will not fly to his mother's aid?

Has he forgot those holy words
Which run: "Who saith that he loves God,
Yet his own brother doth not help,
He lies, and doeth not the truth."

A gust of mortal fear and dread
Swept o'er the hermit, gripped his heart
And stopped his breathing and brought out
Cold drops of sweat upon his brow.

He stared out at the deep, blue main,
'Mid which the holy mount loomed up
With all its massive bulk outlined
As with a braid of molten gold.

Now see! there from Mount Athos' bay
A bark is putting out to sea;
It glides from out the shadow grey
Into the setting sun's bright beams.

A Turk is standing at the helm,
The bark is full of Kozak coats
And sheepskin caps with crimson tops—
The dripping oars spill red and gold.

The deputies from our Ukraine!
The hermit's heart within him leaped;
Beside himself with love and fear
He wildly stretched his withered hands.

"O stay, O stay! Turn back for me!
Vyshensky lives! The same as old
I love Ukraine, my Motherland!
What years I have I'll give to her!

"O stay, O stay! Turn back again!"
In vain! His cries they cannot hear.
And o'er the sparkling, golden waves
The bark sails swiftly on her way.

The hermit wrings his withered hands,
His anguished heart is crushed with grief,
And on the ground before his cross
He casts himself upon his face.

"O Crucified One! Thou didst give
A great commandment unto us:
To love our brethren as ourselves,
And lay our lives down for our friends!

"Grant me to love my brethren thus
And lay my life down for their sakes!
Grant me to look once more upon
And help to save my native land!

"The bark there is the only tie
That binds me still to service, Lord!
Grant that the tie may not be snapped,
Oh, turn it back to me, O Lord!

"Oh, turn the wind against them, Lord,
Or make the sea in tempest rise!
Or else that I may from this cliff
Fly o'er the waters like a bird!.

"Oh, grant me this one miracle!
One miracle, for this brief space!
Oh, leave me not here in despair,
A terrified, forsaken child!"

Thus did Ivan Vyshensky pray
And pressed the cross close to his breast.
Then suddenly he felt a throb
Of pain intense which made him glad.

Then softly, gently passed away
All longing, all disquietude;
A flood of glowing certainty
Surged through the old man's heart and soul.

'Twas clear assurance that the Lord
In heaven above had heard his prayer;
The miracle was here at last,
Illumination's hour had come.

That which he long had waited for,
A sense of complete blessedness,
Enveloped him like tender breeze,
Or harmony ineffable.

With joy he rose up to his feet,
Three times he gravely crossed himself,
And then he blessed the golden beams
Which, like a path, lay on the sea.

Naught else for him was real except
That golden pathway o'er the waves,
And that small bark far out at sea—
He took a step—and disappeared. . . .

And nothing in the cave remained
Besides the cross—the bleaching bones
Of false illusions, vain desires—
The ocean's never-ceasing roar.

1900

MOSES

The background of Franko's masterpiece is the experience of Franko himself and his relations with his own people as their spiritual leader after almost forty years of hard work on their behalf. In expounding his theme it is very easy to understand why Franko adopted the Biblical figure of the great prophet-leader Moses to portray his own life-long struggle for his people's uplift and progress. In structure the poem falls into three parts. In the first part we see the camp of the Hebrews in Moab near the borders of the Promised Land. The people, having been led by Moses out of their former dwelling places and finding themselves in the wilderness, have lost all hope in the promises of a better future. In this state of mind the people give ear to two rebels, Dathan and Abiram, and go so far as to proclaim publicly that any-

one who gives himself out to be a prophet and to speak in the name of Jehovah, shall be spat upon and stoned. Moses boldly meets the crisis and warns the people. When it comes to a final crisis and the people are ready to stone the prophet, not a hand is raised against him, for the people are intimidated by the prophet's manifest authority. The second part shows Moses, unwilling any longer to be the messenger of doom to a people who shut their ears to a divine call, preparing to leave them and go to the Promised Land alone. But before leaving he addresses parting words of instruction to the children who have always flocked around him and listened to him. The allusions are clear, for in Franko's experience it was the older generation who set themselves against him, while it was among the youth that he found the supporters and followers of his ideas. In the third part, which is given here in translation, Moses is alone on Mount Nebo. Here in solitude he is assailed by doubts as to his own motives in seeking to be a leader, then as to the reality of the divine call he received. These doubts and questionings are symbolized by the "dark demon of the wilderness." Moses becomes more and more uncertain and discouraged, so much so, that he finally loses faith in Jehovah. While the evil spirit is mocking and provoking him, he curses Jehovah. This act of despair excludes him from entering the Promised Land. Later on, however, the leaders of the opposition to Moses are crushed and under Joshua the people rise up and press on to the destined goal, that is: the followers of Franko will carry on in the direction pointed out by the teacher.

Though Moses has been excluded from the Land of Promise for a moment of unbelief, yet his work has not been in vain. Such is the substance of this poem, which contains a sort of concealed autobiography of Franko and adumbrations of certain of his contemporaries in the pictures he draws of Moses, Dathan and Abiram and the Hebrew masses.

MOSES

XII

"Enveloped here in solitude,
Like vessel on a boundless sea,
My soul, the sail that drives my bark,
Feels all its power filling me.

"For years long past, through all my life,
I've known full well this tutoress,
For in the desert, 'midst the throng,
I've always walked in loneliness.

"Like wandering planet still I fly
In this unfathomable whole,
And still but one thing do I feel—
The touch of God's hand on my soul.

"Deep silence reigns, man's lips are mute,
And sealed is every human word;
Thou only, deep within my heart,
Hast words to speak to me, O Lord!

" 'Tis Thee alone my soul doth seek;
On Thee alone my heart can count. . . .
Oh, let me hear Thy voice once more
As Thou didst speak on Horeb's mount!

"Lo, I have finished all the course
Which once I heard by Thee rehearsed,
And now I come to Thee as when
I stood before Thee at the first.

"For forty years I've labored, taught,
With all my mind upon Thee bent,
Out of these slaves to make a folk
According to Thy prime intent.

"For forty years, like smith, I've beat
Upon their hearts and consciences,
To come to this, that now I flee
From flying stones and menaces.

"And now, the very moment when
We stand before the Promised Land . . .
Omniscient One, didst Thou foreknow
This end? Hast Thou it thus so planned

"To load my heart with bitter grief?
Perhaps, I've cherished guilty doubt?
Perhaps 'tis some commandment, Lord,
That I've not fully carried out?

"O Lord my God! I've prayed with tears:
I'm but a babe, helpless, supine;
Let someone else the bearer be
Of this majestic word of Thine!

"Alas! I feel within my soul
The sting of doubt, impotency.
Almighty One, speak, answer me!
Art Thou still satisfied with me?"

Thus as he went did Moses pray
In bitterness, dispirited;
But still the desert silence kept,
The bright stars calmly shone o'erhead.

XIII

When lo, there came a smothered laugh
Which sounded in his very ear,
As though someone beside him walked,
Although no footsteps could he hear.

His ear next caught the quiet words
Which thrilled him like a serpent's hiss:
"The bud of folly still brings forth
The fruit of pain and bitterness;

"And when thou findest that thou canst
No longer bear its fruitage dread,
Go shift thy burden on the Lord
And let Him bear it in thy stead."

MOSES

" 'Tis someone speaks! or do I hear
The voice of my own misery?
Or can it be a demon who
Is talking, making mock of me?"

VOICE

"Ah now, thou dost begin to doubt
Thy bold and liberative deed.
For forty years thou wert so sure,—
Though blindly, yet didst bravely lead."

MOSES

" 'Tis someone speaks! Why on my brow
Do pearling drops of sweat now stand?
Afraid? Oh, no! But through my heart
There seems to pass a red-hot brand."

VOICE

"In pride unbounded thou hast turned
Thy people from their proper way,
To make them what thou didst desire—
Is it not late to feel dismay?"

MOSES

"Who art thou? Though I see thee not,
Thou shalt not shake my self-control;
But yet I feel a piercing gaze
That penetrates my very soul."

VOICE

"What matter who I am! To him
Before whom once the sea withdrew,
It matters not who I may be,
But whether what I say is true!"

MOSES

"Nay, 'tis not true that I began
My mission from a sense of pride,
I saw my folk beneath the yoke—
'Twas more than my heart could abide."

VOICE

"Then 'twas because thou wast ashamed
Of kinship to a slavish race
And didst desire to make them such
As would thy sense of shame erase."

MOSES

"Yes. From the depths of ignorance,
Out of the gloom of slavery's night,
I did desire to lift them up
To where I stood—to truth, to light."

VOICE

"Thou didst no counsel take with God
Who set them in that station low;
But now, when thou hast missed thy aim,
Thou callest on Him in thy woe."

MOSES

"Nay! That which me impelled was His
Divine, all-powerful command.
'Twas Horeb's fire in my dark soul
That gave me light to understand."

VOICE

"Ah, maybe that same Horeb fire
Ne'er burned on Horeb's mount at all,
But merely in thy stubborn heart
Thine own desires did loudly call.

"Maybe the voice which led thee on
This ruinous campaign to plan,
Came not from any burning bush,
But simply from thy inner man.

"In truth, 'tis passion blinds the eye;
Desires that magic power possess
To make a world of gods and men —
Mirages of the wilderness.

"Desires, that like a jackal howled
In that ambitious soul of thine
Have made thee deem thyself a chief
And prophet by a call divine."

MOSES

"Alas! Such words make me feel more
A hundredfold my loneliness!
Who art thou, then?"

VOICE

"Azazel I,
Dark demon of the wilderness."

XIV

The darkness fell. In heaven's vault
The twinkling stars alone gave light
And by their beams did Moses climb
Still higher up the mountain's height.

No pathway. 'Neath the pall of night
His only guide was eerie sounds:
Now 'tis the serpent's hiss he hears,
And now the jackal's howl resounds.

Like hero resolute who goes
To meet his enemies' onslaught,
So Moses went, while in his soul
He still a desperate battle fought.

"This yearning," something seemed to say,
"The fruit of shame and sympathy—
Was that the burning bush which made
Me strive to set my people free? . . .

"This yearning—did it then create
All that I thought I saw and heard?
The strength divine, the voice that spoke,
The Lord Jehovah and His word?

"This yearning—my crushed folk to help,
To wipe the tears from misery's face—
Was that the sin for which I'm judged
Worthy of exile, death, disgrace?

"Nay, nay! Do not deceive thyself,
To try to hide it would be sin!
That yearning was a holy one—
But might not evil lurk therein?

"Wast thou not master? Body and soul
Didst thou not hold them in thy power?
Might not the love of power in thee
Those one-time pure desires devour?

"A second Pharoah wast thou not
To them and didst far more transgress?
For thou didst thy control extend
Unto their souls and consciences. . . .

" 'Tis dangerous to take a stand
Against the course of nature's law.
'Tis easy in God's name to speak
And thus to hold the folk in awe.

"Suppose that thou these forty years
Hast lived within a frenzy's ban,
And that, instead of God's commands,
Hast preached thine own shortsighted plan?

"Who knows, perhaps in Egypt they
Might have increased despite their bands?
They might have grown in strength until
The whole land fell into their hands?

"To lead them to a wilderness
From homes where they had lived so long—
Didst thou not think at any time
That this might be a grievous wrong?

"What boots it to a landless folk
To promise freedom as a gift?
Is it not to uproot an oak
And cast it on a stream to drift?

"And did not Dathan speak the truth:
'We've left behind our former nest,
And now to build a new one here
We find we've neither strength nor zest'?

"O Lord my God, speak, answer me!
Did I Thy holy will fulfill,
Or have I but the plaything been
Of my own blindness and selfwill?

"Oh, answer, Lord! Dost Thou endow
With power to speak the burning word
Only in times when passions rise,
In dreams, or when our blood is stirred?"

But God kept silence. Nothing more
Is heard than evil-boding sounds:
Anon it is the serpent's hiss,
And then the jackal's cry resounds.

XV

The sun was rising o'er the plain,
A fiery, crimson ball of light;
Its beams like arrows darting forth
Began to cleave and split the night.

Like king in purple robes arrayed,
Its top with morning's brilliance crowned,
The mighty mass of Nebo's mount
Rose high above the peaks around.

But on the highest pinnacle,
Beyond the rocky slopes, behold!
A figure motionless, like one
Of that Titanic race of old.

There far above all sounds from earth,
Its restless clamor, its outcries,
He stands, and stretching forth his hands,
He lifts them upward towards the skies.

Illuminated by the sun
While standing in its crimson glow,
His long colossal shadow falls
Far out upon the plain below.

Then soon from out the Hebrews' tents
The people rush and every eye
Stares at the Titan whom they see
Outlined against the glowing sky.

" 'Tis Moses!," they all cry aloud
In tones of awestruck fearfulness,
Yet none dares speak the thought which makes
Him quake with apprehensiveness.

'Tis Moses, lost in fervent prayer,
Who stands there talking to his Lord,
And with his prayer he stabs at heaven
As though it were a flaming sword.

Although his lips are tightly clenched,
Although no uttered sound is heard,
His heart is eloquent with pleas,
He cries to God, yet speaks no word.

Still higher rides the sun and soon
It sets the firmament ablaze,
Yet Moses still stands there in prayer,
Immovable as rock he stays.

The demon of the noontide spreads
Prostrating heat o'er all the land,
Still Moses standeth there as though
Supported by an unseen hand,

And then behind Mount Pisgah's heights
The sun begins to sink amain,
And soon gigantic shadows fall
Down from the heights out on the plain,

And Moses' lengthening shadow, too,
Stretched from the mount until it fell
And rested on the Hebrews' tents,
Like to a father's last farewell.

A thrill of fear ran through the camp:
"O God, spare us in this dread hour!
For should the prophet curse us now,
His curse would fall with fearful power!

"With such a potent prayer as this
He could make earth's foundations quake,
Melt hills like wax, and even cause
God's own eternal throne to shake.

"And should he now pronounce a curse
Ere sunset, then the coming night
Would swallow us—both man and beast
Would disappear ere morning light."

XVI

But Moses struggled, wrestled, fought
In vain against the spell of doubt,
And when night swallowed up the mount,
He fell to earth undone, worn out.

A tremor ran through all the mount,
When he fell down upon its crest;
He lay unconscious like a babe
Who rests upon its mother's breast.

And then in melancholy tones
A tender lullaby was heard,
And what seemed like a soft white hand
In light caress o'er his form stirred.

And with this came the quiet words:
"My son, my poor unhappy son!
Behold what life to thee in such
A scanty space of time has done!

" 'Tis surely not long since that I
Cared for thee in thy helplessness?
Was it for this I gave thee birth
To suffer all these cruelties?

"How many furrows seam thy brow!
What frailty doth thy body show!
The raven hair I once caressed
Is now become as white as snow!

"Once thou didst leave me in thy pride
And for the combat didst depart.
Behold what thou hast gained! And say,
How many wounds are in thy heart?

"Poor child, since that day with how much
Of woe hast thou had to contend!
And e'en today thou hast endured
The burning sun—and to what end?

"Thy people's future and its past,
By prayer thou seekest to divine!
By fervent and believing prayer—
O senseless, blinded son of mine!

"Behold! I take a stone which then
Far down in the abyss I cast;
From ledge to ledge it skips and cracks,
Until it disappears at last.

"One chip flies here, another there,
And all their several ways they go;
Yet who can tell where all these chips
Shall find a resting place below?

"I tell thee, 'tis unknown to God,
And though thou pray in agony,
'Twill naught avail—each chip is bound
To follow its own destiny.

"In each chip lies its own self-rule,
In each one dwells intact the force
Which made the chip just what it is
And has determined its whole course;

"And great though thy Jehovah be,
He hath himself no power or might
To change the course of any chip
Or stay it in its destined flight.

"Behold the speck of dust so small
Thine eye can scarcely it discern,
Yet thy Jehovah cannot make
It back to nothingness return,

"And neither hath he power to stay
Or turn it from that course aside
On which for aye 'tis driven by
The inner force which is its guide.

"What shall we say then of a folk,
A many-souled, compounded force,
Where to the movement of the mass
Each soul contributes its own course?

"Hast thou not heard the song that's sung
About Orion, giant blind,
Who, to regain his sight, once sought
The way unto the sun to find?

"He chose a lad to be his guide
And made him on his shoulders climb;
The lad was mischievous and so
He changed direction all the time.

" 'Lead me unto the sun!' The boy
First faced him west at break of day,
Then turned him north about high noon,
And thus the giant led astray.

"Orion still kept on and on,
Still full of faith he'd find the light,
Still full of longing for the sun
Which soon must break upon his sight.

"So, over mountains, over seas,
The blind man strides with giant's vim,
Unknowing that the lad he bears
Upon his neck makes mock of him.

"Orion is this human race,
So full of faith and strong desires,
Which hastens on in toil and pain
And to an unseen goal aspires.

"The unattainable it loves,
Believes in what it cannot see,
To reach fantastic goals it dooms
Its blood and kin to misery.

"It plans great things beyond its strength,
It vainly dreams of mighty acts—
The lad makes mock of it, for he
Stands for the logic of the facts.

" 'Tis like that mythical blind man
Who puts faith in a stranger's eyes,
And ne'er attains at what he aims,
But wanders in a maze of lies.

"Poor child! Where is thy strength of mind?
Thy wisdom, that thou still dost pray?
As well make prayers unto the froth
Upon a stream to make it stay!"

XVII

The words at first seemed to exhale
Refreshing cool like waters clear;
A spirit seemed to breathe therein
Of comfort, kindness, and good cheer.

But slowly they brought heaviness,
As coming storms make themselves known,
A terror such as child might feel
In fearful darkness, all alone.

Then Moses started from the ground,
And with a supreme effort said:
"Why dost thou keep tormenting me,
Since I am now as good as dead?

"Thou art no mother! In thy speech
No trace of mother-love I hear.
No mother, but Azazel thou,
The darkling demon of despair!

"Begone! By God's great fourfold name
I thee adjure, depart from me!
I trust thee not! Thou speakest lies,
Howe'er thou mayst immortal be."

The voice in quiet tones replied:
"O foolish child! O senseless heart!
Thou cursest me by Him of whose
Great power I am myself a part.

"What care I for thy piteous curse!
Didst thou but share a thousandth part
Of all the mysteries I know,
Despair would break thy stubborn heart.

"Thou cursest when thy blindness feels
A ray from that pure light sublime
In which I dwell with Him, beyond
All boundaries of space and time.

"Lo, thou shalt have a glimpse of things
Thy narrow wit ne'er grasped before.
Behold the land which He once pledged
To Abraham, thy ancestor!"

Straightway the west was bathed in fire,
And from the peak where Moses stands,
All Palestine before him lies,
A picture made by giant hands.

And then the unseen presence said
To him in accents calm and low:
"That is the Dead Sea thou dost see,
Which, like a mirror, lies below.

"And on that side the lofty peaks
Whose pinnacles thou canst not count,
Which crowd together toward the skies—
That is the mass of Carmel's mount.

"And to the north is Zion's hill,
Where Jebusites a home have found,
And shouldst thou cry aloud from here,
The Amorites could hear the sound.

"That silver streak is Jordan's stream
Which in the Dead Sea disappears;
Close by its mouth is Jericho,
Which preys on hapless travellers.

"A single valley cuts the land;
On this side are the Ammonites
Who crowd down to the river's banks;
On that side dwell the Canaanites.

"There to the west are mountain peaks
With many a broad and fertile plain;
A little lake lies to the north,
And then the mountains rise again.

"There is the whole of Palestine,
A land of barley and of sheep;
From Kadesh unto Carmel thou
Couldst all of it in one hand heap.

"No broad highways are there, nor e'en
An outlet to the sea—then why
Dost thou dream that a nation there
Could live, and thrive, and multiply?"

But Moses sullenly replied:
"He, at whose word the waters broke
Forth from the rock, can turn this land
Into an Eden for His folk."

XVIII

Once more the smothered laugh was heard:
"Faith shall move mountains! Yet, now see
Another set of pictured scenes:
A foreview of what is to be!

"See how thy people moves ahead,
The Jordan crosses, then invades
The land and captures Jericho!
See through what streams of blood it wades!

"Behold them fight for centuries
To hold this scrap of Palestine;
They battle with the Ammonite,
The Hittite, and the Philistine.

"Now see the Hebrew monarchy!
Behold its cost in blood and tears,
Yet means no more than any fly
Which buzzes round a bullock's ears.

"It never shall reach fullest bloom,
But lose its petals one by one,
And piecemeal to its neighbors fall
Before its downward course is run.

"Behold the black cloud rising there,
The sign of fierce Assyria,
Which brings to Israel new slavery
And death by way of Syria.

"Behold that awful battlefield
All strewn with corpses of the slain—
That is the work of Babylon
Which puts an end to Judah's reign.

"Behold Jehovah's temple burn!
That moving mass, as thick as flies,
Are captives, led away as slaves
To labor or to sacrifice

"Dost hear that weeping? It is he[1]
Who gave wise counsel not to strive
Against the foe, but rather yield
In time in order to survive.

"The stench of ruin! Yet, behold!
Like sun rays straggling through the wrack,
Of all the swarming thousands who
Once went, a few are coming back.

"A little group bestirs itself
Around the walls on Zion's hill;
Another folk, with other god
And shrine, strive hard the gap to fill.

"It fights and grows in poverty,
It roots itself into the ground,
As prickly thorn can cling and thrive
Where'er its shoots a place have found.

"And o'er that people's head there pass
The tempests of world history,
And kingdoms, empires rise and fall
Like phantoms born of mystery,

"But they cling to their scrap of earth
With stubbornness invincible,
And cherish for all other stocks
A hatred stern, implacable.

"Such hatred for another's god
Is worse than any other hate;
See how with them it waxes strong
And fierce e'en in their temple's gate.

1 The prophet Jeremiah.

"Now see how hate produces hate!
For, at a tyrant's fierce command,
Come marching armies to uproot
Thy people once more from their land.

"Dost hear the thud of iron feet?
The legions dread who onward press
To devastate Judea's fields
And turn it to a wilderness?

"Dost hear the clash? It comes from swords
That ring and drip with Jewish blood.
Dost hear that cry? 'Tis Jewish maids,
Dragged by wild horses through the mud.

"Lo, there a starving mother tears
And eats the fruit of her own womb!
There on the crosses thousands hang,
The choicest of thy nation's bloom!

"Once more Jehovah's temple burns,
But for the last time. Nevermore
Shall it arise, for what that hand
Doth smash, none other shall restore.

"Again survivors, like a stream,
Are swept into captivity,
But none return, for now their land
Is lost for all eternity.

"Extinguished now is Israel's star,
And never shall it see rebirth;
Naught but the hate born in the shrine
Is left to wander o'er the earth.

"Dost thou doubt this? Canst thou believe?
Thou still hast faith? I understand!
Yet here's the Eden that awaits
Thy people in the Promised Land!

"This is that for which thou hast toiled!
Is it worth while? I ask thee: tell
Me if thou still wilt pray to God
To let thy folk go there to dwell?"

Then Moses' head sank on his breast.
"Ah, woe is me! What misery!
Must then my people ne'er be free,
But always live in slavery?"

He fell face downward on the ground;
"Jehovah hath deluded us!"
Demonic laughter followed on
His words—an echo ominous.

XIX

The thunders pealed. The shock was felt
Down in the strongest mountain's frame.
Peal followed peal, like heralds sent
Jehovah's coming to proclaim.

A black and threatening cloud arose,
A wall that blotted out the skies,
'Twas as though Mother Night in wrath
Had veiled her face all but her eyes.

And in the gloom those eyes flared out
From time to time in fiery flame
With loud outburst, as mother might
An erring, wayward daughter blame.

Awe-stricken Moses listened to
The dialogue 'twixt gloom and flash,
Yet still his heart could not discern
Jehovah's voice in bolt and crash.

A louder crash burst overhead
That drowned the other thunders' noise,
His hair rose up, his heart stood still . . .
But this was not Jehovah's voice.

Along the cliffs the wild wind howled
In vicious tones that brought a chill
Into the soul and forced a groan . . .
But yet Jehovah's voice was still.

And mingled rain and hail poured down,
And with it came a gripping frost,
So fierce that in his helplessness
A man might yield himself as lost.

Then followed calm. The waters sobbed
As though in pity for the storm;
A tender breeze sprang up and blew
With perfumes laden, sweet and warm.

The breeze was vocal. Moses felt
That something in his heart was stirred.
He knew that strange, mysterious speech;
At last Jehovah's voice was heard.

" 'Jehovah hath deluded us.'
Since when with thee did I contract
About thy people? When didst thou
An earnest take to seal the pact?

"Hast seen my plans? Hast ever read
The pages of my judgment book?
Hast seen my ends or know'st that I
At any time my aims forsook?

"O thou of little faith! Ere thou
Didst stir within thy mother's womb,
I numbered every hair and marked
Thy every breath from birth to tomb.

"Ere Abraham went forth from Ur
To go to Haran, I foreknew
Each one of his posterity
And what each several one would do.

"This land of yours is small, confined,
And all its riches no great sum?
Hast thou forgotten that the crib
Is small from whence the greatest come?

"The hour will come when I shall lead
You forth to tasks to try your strength,
E'en as a mother weans her child,
When the due time arrives at length.

"Here on a poor and scanty soil,
Like thorn which grows and thrives on sand,
Ye shall wax stout and strong so that
Ye may the coming change withstand.

"Well do I know your temperament,
Your stubborn, never-sated soul;
On fertile soil, ye'd spread abroad
And seize and gorge without control.

"With soul and body ye would long
For every morsel that ye see;
Mammon would take you in his net,
Like sluggish fishes in the sea.

"In Egypt 'neath the yoke ye groaned,
Yet greedily devoured its food;
Eternal loathing shall ye learn
For what ye once esteemed as good .

"When, having left this newer land,
And laid in ruins all its fields,
Ye shall be scattered o'er the earth
To conquer all the wealth it yields.

"Yet will I lay a heavy curse
On all the treasures that ye gain;
Like serpent on your gold, I'll give
You grief, and suffering, and pain.

"Whoever gains all earthly wealth
And finds in it his chiefest joy,
The same its captive doth become,
For riches can the soul destroy.

"The master and the slave of wealth,
Bought at the cost of blood and tears—
That man, increasing what he gains,
Pulls down the structure which he rears.

"Thus, like a leech which sucks the blood,
And healing yet itself doth die,
So ye, lords of a golden sea,
Shall find it leave you high and dry.

"And in that golden ocean, ye
Shall suffer an eternal thirst;
The golden bread shall never feed
Your souls, but be a thing accursed.

"Yet ye shall be my witnesses
As far as earth's remotest bound;
Ye shall supply the Bread of Life
Wherever hungering souls are found.

"He who gives you mere bread to eat,
Shall with his earthly bread decay,
But he who ministers unto
Your souls shall live with me alway.

"There shall ye find your Promised Land,
A boundless realm of wealth and pride;
Yet as a leader to that land
Thou hast been but a sorry guide.

"There lies your glorious Promised Land,
Beyond all other lands most blest;
This Palestine is but the pledge
I give, a token for the rest.

"Let this then, be a memory,
A dream, desire unsatisfied,
So that by seeking it, my folk
May as the lords of earth abide.

"But thou, because for one brief space,
By doubting, hast committed sin,
Thou shalt indeed behold the land,
But shalt not set a foot therein.

"Thy bones shall moulder in this place,
A warning sign to strike dismay
In all who strive to reach a goal,
Yet always perish on the way!"

XX

A fearlessness stalks o'er the hills,
As clouds across the desert glide,
It gives birth to a host of thoughts
And longings o'er the countryside.

It strews old leaves and flowers sere
Which have lain withered many a year;
It stirs old voices in the soul
Which one deemed nevermore to hear.

That which but yesterday was naught,
Today is full of loveliness;
What yesterday was trodden down,
Today seems crowned with sacredness.

All through the Hebrew camping ground
The night was spent in deadly fear;
When morning came, all rushed to look:
Is he still on the mountain there?

No, he is gone! And that word 'gone'
Struck every heart with mortal chill.
All felt that something had been lost
And naught its place could ever fill.

That unseen thing which in their midst
Had always glowed like hidden fire,
Which gave a meaning to their lives,
Enlightened, and stirred up desire.

Immeasurable sadness fell
Upon their hardened consciences,
And all the camp lay 'neath the spell
Of stupified faint-heartedness.

With faces pale and drawn they stare
At one another without end,
Like murderers, who, in a dream,
Have killed their dearest, closest friend.

A noise of hoofs! A desert storm?
Or did he prophesy the truth? . . .
'Tis Joshua, the herdsmen's prince,
And after him the tribesmen's youth.

They hasten, driving on their herds . . .
Is this, perchance, a hostile raid?
All blench and fly as driven by
God's unseen hand upon them laid,

By solitude and nameless fear,
By spiritual poverty . . .
But Joshua's command rings out:
"To arms, and fight for liberty!"

Like eagle's shriek, above the crowd,
Rang out that shrill and piercing cry;
It rolled and echoed from the mount:
"To arms, and fight for liberty!"

An instant—then all will awake
And break their stupefaction strange,
Yet none will know how in a flash
There came o'er them this sudden change.

An instant—then a thousand throats
Will Joshua's battle-cry repeat,
And from the sluggish nomads rise
A race of heroes to their feet.

Their drumming feet will pound the sand
And make it mud beneath their feet;
Abiram will be stoned to death,
A noose will Dathan's schemes defeat.

O'er mountains like a bird they'll fly,
And Jordan's stream be dashed to spray,
The walls of Jericho like ice
Will melt before the trumpet's bray.

Thus towards an unknown future, they
Will march with longing and dismay,
To pave a highway for man's soul,
Yet perish on their onward way.

Lviv, January to July, 1905.

From SEMPER TIRO[1]

This was the last volume of his poems that Franko published. In tone it is much different from the melancholy which frequently obtruded itself in his poetry in previous years. In general, the tone is that of a calm, balanced philosopher, whose expressions are tinged with playful humor and gentle satire. But the poet is still occupied with the social themes which mark his earlier work. This is evident in his *Conquistadores,* which reflects the same ideas in another framework as are contained in his youthful *Pioneers.* The last poem in this

1 "Always a Learner"

selection is a fitting close to this anthology in English of a great man's poetic works.

SEMPER TIRO

Man's life is brief, but what art infinite
It takes to live it as creative task!
At first it seems as though 'twere but to flit
In magic dreams, in fantasies to bask.
But soon it grows to bounds unknown before,
Demands thy hopes, begins thy soul to ask,
Takes all thy powers, and still cries out for more.

Then, with the fruitage of thy mind and heart,
Thou standest as before some deity.
To honor her thou dost thy blood impart,
Thy nervous force, thy brain's capacity,
As to a goddess that must be adored,
And feelest like a slave, no longer free,
While in thy heart thou say'st: "I will be lord!"

Believe it not! Deceptive is the Muse.
The goddess will suck out thine "I" to use
It as a vessel for her sportive play;
She'll drain thy soul and then cast it away.
Heed not the strains thou hearest from her lyre:
"As master, thou upon men's hearts shalt play,
And millions move with thy poetic fire."

Believe it not! If thou indeed must sing,
If poesy within thee is supreme,
Serve thou the goddess without wavering,
But to rule over her thou must not dream.
Let thy song at the feast of life ring free
And unconstrained. Know thou but this one thing:
The poet always must a learner be.

THE CONQUISTADORES

Across the stormy ocean,
While billows seethe and roar,
Our fleet sails onward, fighting,
To reach an unknown shore,
With straining masts, torn canvas . . .
When lo, the peaceful strand!
Now veer, and steer together
To reach the longed-for land!
Cast out the rusty anchors!
Leap out upon the bank!
No sound! . . . 'Tis scarcely dawning . . .
All quiet. . . . Stand in rank!
The drowsy town still slumbers . . .
We'll take them while they sleep . . .
We'll wake them with our war-cry,
And then the victory reap.
But ere we start, our vessels
With fire let us waste.
For us, there's no returning
Back on the path we've traced.
A burst of smoke! A groaning
Seems from our ships to rise.
In flames the ragged canvas
Flares upwards to the skies.
O'er all the cordage raging
The fire runs amain
Till but the masts are standing,
Like candles wrapped in flame.
We care not though hereafter
Beneath time's dust we lie;
We die or else we conquer!
This is our battle cry.
The world belongs to heroes,
The devil take all fears!

We win by blood and labor
A home for coming years.

THE RIGHTEOUS MAN

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly (Psalm I.)

Blest is the man who goes where evil reigns
And raises there his voice for righteousness;
Who, unabashed, the lawless ones arraigns,
And, unafraid, plucks at their consciences.

Blest is the man who, in times of decay,
When even boldest spirits are all cowed,
Will with his cries arouse the slumbering crowd
And then before their eyes the truth display.

Blest is the man who, in a clamorous throng,
Like oak immovable, will firmly stand;
To treat with evil ne'er puts forth his hand,
Will rather break than bow down to the wrong.

Blessed is he, for this by men abused,
Proscribed, yea, even slain to make him dumb;
'Tis they prepare his triumph yet to come;
By their own consciences they'll stand accused.

Blest be all those who did not fear the cost,
Whenever truth and justice were at stake;
Though to men's memories their names be lost,
Their blood shall all men's blood more noble make.

FOXES

Thy prophets are like foxes in the desert (Ezekiel XIII).

The strength of Rus[1] marched out to war,
The air filled with the flags they bore.
The crimson flags like poppies seemed,
Their swords bright in the sunlight gleamed.
The foxes who in deserts bark,
Give forth no gleam, create no spark.

The strength of Rus marched out to war,
But not to shed their brother's gore;
Not over weaker ones to lord,
But to repel a savage horde
And save the country's sacred ark,
While foxes in the desert bark.

No harm to others we intend,
But what is ours we will defend;
For we are not like wooden posts,
To cringe before a foeman's boasts
And be for wounds and shame the mark—
Let foxes in the desert bark!

Yea! let them bark as on that day
Those others barked, when in array
They saw the strength of Rus surround
The land to its remotest bound,
And, like a conflagration, sweep
O'er all the steppe and saw it leap
From end to end in one fell blast

1 Ukraine, not Russia.

That made the foxes stand aghast;
And still in dreams are they dismayed,
Recalling what once Rus displayed:
A flower of youth which ne'er fell back,
The Kozak and the Haydamak,

Who never drew a coward's breath,
Who kept on fighting till the death,
And on the steppe poured out their blood
Till it rolled crimson like a flood
Down through the history of Ukraine. . . .

The very thought that once again
The scourge might reoccur today
Still fills the whelps with deep dismay,
And when they see a gleam or spark,
They still like desert foxes bark.

BY BABYLON'S RIVER

By Babylonia's river I sat down as though dazed,
And on my shattered harp in desperation gazed.

A Babylonian crowd around me mocked me sore:
"Sing us a song of Zion, a lay about Tabor!"

"A song of Zion, Tabor? 'Twould be a sorry tale,
For Tabor is a waste, on Zion stands a jail.

"I know but one old song on which I can rely.
'Tis: I was born a slave and as a slave I'll die.

"I came into the world amid the sound of blows,
And fathered by a slave who lived among his foes.

"I have been trained to bow and show a smiling face
Toward all those who oppress and castigate my race.

"My teacher was a dog who learns to stand and lick
The cruel hand of him who beats him with a stick.

"And though I were as straight as trees on Lebanon,
My soul would still be bent, a weed to tread upon.

"Though sometimes I may make my words like thunder
sound,
'Tis but a hollow noise wherein no harm is found.

"And though at times my soul its freedom seeks to gain,
My blood is slavish blood, my brain's a captive's brain.

"And though on hands and feet no fetters do I bear,
My nerves are always fettered by a slavish fear.

"Though free I call myself, my back I always crook,
And freely in the face of no one can I look.

"Before all men's abuse, I humbly bow and blench;
The free word in my breast, I, like a candle, quench.

"Though night and day I toil with scanty food and sleep,
I do it as a serf, who sows while others reap.

"I love my work, yet e'er I'm by the thought restrained:
Thou'rt chained to it as slave is to his barrow chained.

"Though I some goods amass by toiling long and hard,
'Tis like a stranger's wealth o'er which I stand on guard.

"No matter whom I meet, I must the lesser be;
When it comes to a choice, the shorter end's for me.

"And though at times my soul revolts and wants to fight,
To shake my fetters off, defend my human right—

"Alas, 'tis not a wrath that can avail to save,
'Tis but a weakling's rage, the fury of a slave.

"O Babylonian wives, depart and go your ways,
And with such wondering eyes no longer on me gaze!

"Lest curse of mine should blast your fruit with infamy,
And any bear a child to be a slave like me.

"O Babylonian maids, pass on, look not on me!
Let not your hearts be touched with sympathy for me,

"Lest your lot be a fate more bitter than the grave,
The greatest curse that could befall—to love a slave!"

THE LEAVES OF KAAF

In dream I strayed into a valley fair,
'Twas all so peaceful, calm, and glittering;
It seemed to me my steps were borne on air.

The valley lay adorned by beauteous spring,
Enveloped in sweet odors like a bride;
I heard a swarm of unseen songbirds sing.

A field of silvery rye waved on one side;
Above it roared and hummed a forest hoar
In whose cool depths dark mysteries abide.

And from the lea below the zephyrs bore
Perfumes so overwhelming that the breast
Expanded till the lungs could bear no more.

The perfumes came from flowers standing dressed
In gorgeous colors, varied forms, the like
Perhaps, no human hands have e'er caressed.

And, bending o'er those flowers so unlike
What I had ever known, I heard a sound
Of tender music on my hearing strike.

Amidst the flowers maidens walked around,
With hand in hand they paced, a gracious band,
All dressed in white, with lovely chaplets crowned.

Each held a tiny basket in her hand,
And some had watering pots, and one a spade.
In all the beds each flower bloom they scanned.

They did not pluck the singing flowers, but made
A choice and took from every plant a leaf,
And these with care they in their baskets laid.

I spoke to one of them who seemed the chief:
"To what end are these leaves effectual?
As food or for medicinal relief?"

She said: "We pluck them for our festival;
Not for the sick, but for the hale and strong;
And as for food, we need no carnival.

"Whoever puts a leaf upon his tongue,
And eats of it, imbibing all its juice—
His heart will fill with raptures still unsung.

"It will new courage through his soul diffuse;
His eyes will shine with joy unknown before;
'Twill all his woes to nothingness reduce.

"One instant, and thy burdened heart no more
Shall be weighed down. Thou shalt be radiant.
'Twill all thy child's simplicity restore.

"Then men will seek thee as a confidant,
And in their friendship thou shalt find joy, too.
Kaaf is the name by which we call this plant."

She went away and then came other two:
"Art thou not gladdened by these leaves of ours?
Then to thy workshop take the residue.

"Why should resentment spoil thy working hours,
Contempt of mankind, envy, and defeat?"

I plucked some leaves from those strange singing flowers.
Here is a handful of them. Take and eat!

THE POET'S TASK

O poet, know: that on the path of life,
No pearls, no riches, shall thou ever find,
Nor shelter from earth's elemental strife.

O poet, know: thy mission is designed
For thee to feel man's pains in their extremes,
Ere thou shalt reach thy goal by heaven assigned.

O poet, know: that in the sphere of dreams,
Illusions, fancies, shall thy Eden bloom;
Thy task: to seek therein for vital themes.

The poet-prophet's gift will thee foredoom
To lead thy fellows to a Promised Land;
But yet, to enter it, do not presume.

A feeling heart is thine to understand
And help thy brother in his hour of grief,
Or if cast down, enable him to stand.

But none to thine own woes will lend belief,
No one will stretch a helping hand to thee,
Or to thy bloody weeping bring relief.

Yet deem not that thou'rt born to misery;
Thy joys thou hast in treasures of the mind,
Creative powers make thy felicity.

All that the world denies thee thou shalt find
Within thy soul, far brighter and more pure:
The loftiest truths, and mastery unconfined.

Therefore avoid all that is dark, obscure,
Deceiving splendors, temporary fame,
With all that's selfish, specious, or impure.

And on thy brow, be it thy constant aim
To wear the crown of modesty and grace,
Fit symbol of a spirit without blame.

Go through life's masquerade with naked face,
And, like the sage of old, a lantern bear,
Whene'er thou walkest in the market place.

The soul of things will in its light appear,
Its rays will penetrate the darkest mass.

Be not a judge to men, but friend sincere,
Both mirror and restorer. Look and pass.[1]

1 In the original this final sentence is in Italian, a quotation from Dante: "Guarda e passa."

BE HUMAN

Be human, brother. Let thy humanism
Gush from the fount of love without a clog,
Not roiled by pride nor tinged with favoritism.

Be human. Quite unlike the theologue,
Who makes man's duty to his ruling cleave,
Who fears a lion, beats a helpless dog,

Who counts as brothers none but who believe
His doctrines as to how to reach life's goal,
Who points to heaven, yet want doth not relieve,

Who strains at gnats, but gulps a camel whole.
Thou canst not love alike all men, 'tis true,
Yet wish no evil to a single soul.

No credit give to what thou hast no clue,
To falsehood never lend a listening ear,
See to it that all get their rightful due.

Wring not thy hands in anger, ne'er despair;
Keep thou a catlike placidness in store.
Be on thy guard against the flatterer,

And always say to parasites: "No more!"

DIDST THOU BUT KNOW

Didst thou but know how words with power may glow!
One tiny word that gushes from the heart
Can heal another's long deep-hidden smart
And new life give. Didst thou but know!
Then surely by despair, with eyes abased
And lips in silence pursed, thou wouldst not haste,
But rather, comfort wouldst thou spread around
Thy path, like showers on parched and thirsty ground,
Didst thou but know!

Didst thou but know what sharp and rankling woe
One word with pride or anger edged may do!
How it some soul with hatred may imbue
And lifelong poison leave. Didst thou but know!
Thou wouldst thy passions, like a savage beast,
Chain in the darkest corner of thy breast.
Though thou no word of sympathy canst speak,
Yet with harsh words thou never harm wouldst wreak,
Didst thou but know!

Didst thou but know how much of secret pain
Is masked by features in forced calmness set;
How many a face that smiles by day is wet
With tears that on the nightly pillow rain—
With love thou wouldst make keen both eyes and ears,
And, plunging in the sea of human tears,
Wouldst spend thy strength to heal and bring relief,
And come to know how much there is of grief,
Didst thou but know!

Didst thou but know! This knowledge can but come
Through sympathy, 'tis taught us by the heart.
The heart will to the dark mind light impart.
And thus for thee the world will new become.
Thy heart will larger grow. In times of fear
Thou'lt steadfast stand, thy path will clear appear.
Like Him who walked in tempest on the wave,
Thou too, shalt say to those who weep: "Be brave!
Be not afraid, 'Tis I!"

1906.