

I.

THE NOBLE BOYAR LINEAGE OF THE SHEPTYTSKY'S

The spirit of democracy that predominated at the end of the World War I, closed the era of the old dynasties such as those of the tsars of Russia and the kaisers of Germany and Austria, and also challenged the existence of many noble families. The numerous newly-formed states introduced agricultural reforms that stripped the nobility of their vast holdings which were the bulwark of their power and influence. In some countries even the use of the titles of nobility was abolished. In some countries under communist domination, families of the nobility disappeared without any vestige. The concept of nobility in the modern democratic world became passé. And yet, how ignoble it would be if we failed to acknowledge the contributions the nobility made over the centuries to world culture, to church life, to their own countries and people before they left the world scene. Overlooking the bleaker aspects of the era of nobility, we can only hope that today's elite in spirit or wealth could emulate their predecessors.

