

his horse, — how, dressed in satin, he had spotted himself with tar, on purpose to show Cossack contempt for these lordly stuffs.

He never warmed any place long. Caprice was the motive of his deeds. At times, when he came to Chigirin, Cherkasi, or Pereyasláv, he had terrible frolics with other Zaporojians; at times he lived like a monk, spoke to no man, escaped to the steppe. Then again he surrounded himself with blind minstrels, and listened to their songs and stories for days at a time, heaping gold on them. Among nobles he knew how to be a polished cavalier; among Cossacks he was the wildest of Cossacks. In knightly company he was a knight; among robbers, a robber. Some held him to be insane; for he was an unbridled, mad spirit. Why he was living in the world, what he wanted, whither he was tending, whom he served, he knew not himself. He served the steppes, the whirlwinds, war, love, his own fancy. This fancy of his distinguished him from all the other rule leaders, and from the whole robber herd who had only plunder as an object, and for whom it was the same whether they plundered Tartars or their own. Bogun took plunder, but preferred war to pillage; he was in love with peril for its own charm; he gave gold for songs; he hunted for glory, and cared for no more.

Of all leaders, he alone personified best the Cossack knight; therefore songs had sought him out as a favorite, and his name was celebrated throughout the whole Ukraine.

He had recently become the Pereyasláv lieutenant-colonel, but he exercised the power of colonel; for old Loboda held the baton feebly in his stiffening hand.

Pan Yan, therefore, knew well who Bogun was, and if he asked the old princess whether the Cossack was in the service of her sons, he did it through studied contempt; for he felt in him an enemy, and in spite of all the reputation of Bogun, his blood boiled up because the Cossack had begun with him so insolently. He understood, too, that what had been begun would not end in a trifle. But Skshetuski was as unbending as an axle, self-confident to excess, yielding before nothing, and really eager for danger. He was ready even that moment to urge his horse after Bogun, but he rode near the princess. Besides, the wagon had already passed the ravine, and lights were gleaming in Rozlogi.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Kurtsevichi Bulygi were of an ancient princely stock which used the escutcheon of Kurts, claimed to be from Koryat, but was really from Rurik. Of the two main lines, one lived in Lithuania, the other in Volynia, till Prince Vassily, one of the numerous descendants of the Volynian line, settled beyond the Dnieper. Being poor, he did not wish to remain among his powerful relatives, and entered the service of Prince Michael Vishnyevetski, father of the renowned "Yarema."¹

Having covered himself with glory in that service, he received from the latter, as a permanent possession, Krasnie Rozlogi, which subsequently, by reason of its vast number of wolves, was called Volchie Rozlogi; and there he settled for good. He went over to the Latin rite in 1629, and married a lady of a distinguished Austrian family of Italian descent. From that marriage a daughter, Helena, came into the world a year later, her mother dying at her birth. Prince Vassily, without thinking of a second marriage, gave himself up altogether to the management of his land and the rearing of his only daughter. He was a man of great character and uncommon virtue. Having acquired a moderate fortune rather rapidly, he remembered at once his eldest brother Constantine, who, rejected by his powerful family, remained in Volynia, and was obliged to live on rented land. He brought him, with his wife and five sons, to Rozlogi, and shared every bit of bread with him.

The two Kurtsevichi lived in this way quietly till the end of 1634, when Vassily went with King Vladislav to the siege of Smolensk, where that unfortunate event took place which caused his ruin. In the royal camp was intercepted a letter written to Sheyin (the Russian commander), signed with the name of the prince, with the seal of Kurts added. Such a clear proof of treason on the part of a knight who till then had enjoyed an unspotted fame, astonished and confounded every one. It was in vain that Vassily called God to witness that neither the hand nor the signature on the paper was his; the arms of Kurts on the seal removed

¹ This is the popular form in Little Russian; therefore it is quoted.

every doubt, no one believed that the seal had been lost, — which was the prince's explanation, — and finally the unfortunate prince, sentenced *pro crimine perduclionis* to the loss of his honor and his head, was forced to seek safety in flight.

Arriving at Rozlogi in the night, Vassily implored his brother Constantine, by all that was holy, to care for Helena as his own daughter, and then he disappeared forever. It was said that he wrote a letter from Bar to Vishnyevetski, entreating the prince not to take the bread out of Helena's mouth, and to leave her in peace at Rozlogi under the care of Constantine; after that there was no more word of him. There was a report that he had died suddenly, also that he had joined the imperial army and had perished in battle in Germany. No one, however, had certain knowledge of him; but he must have died, since he inquired no further for his daughter. Soon mention of his name ceased, and he was only remembered when his innocence became evident. A certain Kuptsevich from Vytebsk confessed on his death-bed that he had written, at the siege of Smolensk, the letter to Sheyin, and sealed it with the seal found in camp. In the face of such testimony, pity and confusion seized all hearts. The sentence was revoked, the name of Prince Vassily restored to honor, but for Vassily himself the reward for his sufferings came too late. As to Rozlogi, Yeremi did not think of confiscating that; for the Vishnyevetskis, knowing Vassily better than others, were never entirely convinced of his guilt. He might even have remained under their powerful protection and laughed at the sentence; and if he fled, it was because he was unable to endure disgrace.

Helena grew up quietly at Rozlogi under the tender care of her uncle, and only after his death did painful times begin for her. The wife of Constantine, from a family of dubious origin, was a stern, impulsive, and energetic woman, whom her husband alone was able to keep within bounds. After his death she gathered into her iron hand the management of Rozlogi. The serving-men trembled before her, the house-servants feared her as fire, and soon she made herself known to the neighbors. During the third year of her management she attacked the Sivinskis of Brovarki twice with armed hand, dressed in male attire and on horseback, leading her servants with hired Cossacks. Once when the regiments of Prince Yeremi scattered Tartar bands, plundering in the neighborhood of Semi Mogil,

the princess at the head of her people cut to pieces the remnant that had escaped as far as Rozlogi. She had settled for good in Rozlogi, and began to consider the place as the property of herself and her sons. She loved these sons as the wolf loves her young, but being rude she had no thought of a proper education for them. A monk of the Greek rite from Kieff taught them to read and write; here their education ended. It was not far to Lubni, where Vishnyevetski's court was, at which the young princes might have acquired polish and trained themselves to public business in the Chancery, or entered the school of knighthood under his banners. The princess, however, had reasons of her own for not sending the young men to Lubni.

Prince Yeremi might remember to whom Rozlogi belonged, and might look into the guardianship of Helena, or in memory of Vassily might take that guardianship upon himself; then she would undoubtedly have to move away from Rozlogi. The princess preferred, therefore, that in Lubni they should forget there were Kurtsevichi on earth. So the young princes were reared half wild, more as Cossacks than as nobles. While still young, they took part in the quarrels of the old princess, in attacks on the Sivinskis, and in her expeditions against Tartars. Feeling an innate aversion to books and letters, they fired arrows from bows for whole days, or took exercise in the management of their fists or sabres and lariats. They never occupied themselves with the estate, for their mother would not let that out of her own hands. It was sad to look at those descendants of a noted stock in whose veins princely blood was flowing, but whose manners were harsh and rude, and whose ideas and dull hearts reminded one of the uncultivated steppe. Meanwhile they were growing up like young oaks; seeing their own ignorance, they were ashamed to live with the nobility; on the contrary, the companionship of wild Cossack leaders was more agreeable. When old enough, therefore, they went with companies to the lower country, where they were considered as comrades. Sometimes they stayed half a year in the Saitch; went to "industry" with the Cossacks, took part in campaigns against the Turks and Tartars, which finally became their chief and favorite occupation.

Their mother was not opposed to this, for they often brought back abundant booty. But in one of these campaigns the eldest, Vassily, fell into pagan hands. His

brothers, it is true, with the aid of Bogun and the Zaporozhians, rescued him, but without his eyes. From that time Vassily was forced to remain at home; as formerly he had been the wildest of all, so then he became very mild and was sunk in meditation and religious exercises. The young men continued their warlike occupations, which at last obtained for them the surname of Prince-Cossacks.

A glance at Rozlogi-Siromakhi was enough to enable one to guess what kind of people lived there. When the envoy and Pan Yan drove through the gate with their wagons, they saw, not a castle, but rather a roomy shed built of enormous oak planks, with narrow windows like port-holes. Dwellings for servants and Cossacks, the stables, the granaries, and store-rooms were attached directly to the house, composing an irregular building made up of many parts, some high and some low. It would have been difficult to consider such a poor and rude exterior as a human dwelling, but for the lights in the windows. On the square in front of the house were two well-cranes; nearer the gate was a post with a ring on the top, to which was chained a bear. A strong gate of the same kind of planks as the house afforded entrance to the square, which was surrounded by a ditch and a palisade.

Evidently it was a fortified place, secure against attacks and incursions. It recalled in every regard the Cossack posts of the frontier; and though the majority of nobles on the border had no houses of fashion different from this, still this was more like some species of robber's nest than any of them. The attendants who came out with torches to meet the guests were bandits in appearance, rather than servants. Great dogs on the square tugged at their chains as if to break away and rush at the newly arrived. From the stable was heard the neighing of horses. The young Bulygi and their mother began to call to the servants with commands and curses.

In the midst of this hurly-burly the guests entered the house. But now Pan Rozvan Ursu, who had almost regretted his promise to pass the night there when he saw the wildness and wretchedness of the place, was really astonished at the sight that met his eyes. The inside of the house answered in no way to the unseemly exterior. First they entered a broad ante-room, the walls of which were almost entirely covered with armor, weapons, and skins of wild beasts. Logs of wood were blazing in two

enormous fireplaces, and by their bright light were to be seen, on one wall, horse-trappings, shining armor, Turkish steel shirts on which here and there were glittering precious stones; chain-mail with gilt knobs on the buckles, half armor, breast-pieces, neck-pieces, steel armor of great value, Polish and Turkish helmets, steel caps with silver tips. On the opposite wall hung shields, no longer used in that age; near them Polish lances and Oriental javelins, also edged weapons in plenty,—from sabres to daggers and yatagans,—the hilts of which glittered in the firelight with various colors, like stars. In the corners hung bundles of skins of bears, wolves, foxes, martens, and ermine, gained by the hunting of the princes. Farther away, near the walls, dozing on their rings were hawks, falcons, and great golden eagles; the last, brought from the distant steppes of the East, were used in the wolf-hunt.

From that antechamber the guests passed to a spacious reception-room, and here in a chimney with a depression in front burned a brisk fire. In this room there was still greater luxury than in the antechamber. The bare planks of the walls were covered with woven stuffs. On the floor lay splendid Oriental carpets. In the centre of the room stood a long, cross-legged table, made of common planks, on which were goblets, gilt or cut from Venetian glass. At the walls were smaller tables, bureaus, and shelves on which were caskets, bottle-cases inlaid with bronze, brass candlesticks and clocks, taken in their time by the Turks from the Venetians and by the Cossacks from the Turks. The whole room was crowded with superfluous objects, of a use very often unknown to the possessor. Everywhere was luxury blended with the extreme rudeness of the steppe. Costly Turkish bureaus, inlaid with bronze, ebony, mother-of-pearl, were standing at the side of unplanned shelves; simple wooden chairs at the side of soft sofas. Cushions lying in Eastern fashion on sofas had covers of brocade or silk stuff, but were rarely filled with down, oftener with hay or peastalks. Costly stuffs and superfluous objects were the so-called Turkish or Tartar goods, partly bought for a trifle from the Cossacks, partly obtained in numerous wars by old Prince Vassily, partly during expeditions with men of the lower country by the young Bulygi, who chose rather to go with boats to the Black Sea than to marry or manage the land.

All this roused no surprise in Skshetuski, who was well

acquainted with houses on the border; but the Wallachian boyar was astonished to see in the midst of all this luxury the Kurtsevichi in leather boots and fur coats not much better than those worn by the servants. Pan Longin Podbipienta, accustomed to a different order of things in Lithuania, was equally astonished.

Meanwhile the young princes received the guests heartily and with great welcome. Being little trained in society, they did this in so awkward a manner that the lieutenant was scarcely able to restrain his laughter. The eldest, Simeon, said, —

"We are glad to see you, and are thankful for your kindness. Our house is your house; therefore make yourselves at home. We bow to you, gentlemen, at our lowly thresholds."

And though no humility was observable in the tone of his speech, nor a recognition that he received persons superior to himself, he bowed in Cossack fashion to the girdle; and after him bowed the younger brothers, thinking that politeness required it.

"The forehead to you, gentlemen, the forehead."

Just then the princess, seizing Bogun by the sleeve, led him to another room.

"Listen, Bogun," said she, hurriedly, "I've no time for long speeches; I saw you attack that young noble. You are seeking a quarrel with him."

"Mother," answered the Cossack, kissing the old woman's hand, "the world is wide, — one road to him, another to me. I have not known him, nor heard of him; but let him not draw near the princess, or as I live I'll flash my sabre in his eyes."

"Oh! are you mad? Where, Cossack, is your head? What has come upon you? Do you want to ruin yourself and us? He is a soldier of Prince Yeremi, a lieutenant, a person of distinction, for he was sent as envoy from the prince to the Khan. Let a hair fall from his head while under our roof, do you know what will happen? The prince will turn his eyes to Rozlogi, will avenge this man, send us to the four winds, take Helena to Lubni, — and then what? Will you quarrel with Vishnyevetski, or attack Lubni? Try it if you want to taste an impaling stake, lost Cossack! Whether he comes near the girl or not, he will leave here as he came, and there will be peace. But restrain yourself! If not, then be off to where you

came from, for you will bring misfortune to us if you stay."

The Cossack gnawed his mustache, frowned, but saw that the princess was right.

"They will go away in the morning, mother, and I will restrain myself; only let the princess stay in her own rooms."

"Why do you ask this? So that they should think I keep her in confinement? She will appear, because I wish it. Give no orders to me in this house, for you are not master here!"

"Be not angry, Princess! Since it cannot be otherwise, I will be as sweet to them as Turkish tidbits. I'll not grind my teeth nor touch my head, even though anger were consuming me, though my soul were ready to groan. Let your will be done."

"Oh, that's your talk! Take your lyre, play, sing; then you will feel easier. But now meet the guests."

They returned to the reception-room, in which the princes, not knowing how to entertain the guests, continued to ask them to make themselves at home, and were bowing to the girdle before them.

Skshetuski looked sharply and haughtily into the eyes of Bogun as soon as he came, but he saw in them neither quarrel nor defiance. The face of the youthful leader was lighted up with good-humor, so well simulated that it might have deceived the most experienced eye. The lieutenant looked at him carefully, for previously he had been unable to distinguish his features in the darkness. He saw now a young hero, straight as a poplar, with splendid brunette face, and rich, dark, drooping mustache. On that face gladness burst through the pensive mood of the Ukraine, as the sun through a mist. The leader had a lofty forehead, on which his dark hair drooped as a mane above his powerful brow. An aquiline nose, dilated nostrils, and white teeth, shining at every smile, gave the face a slight expression of rapacity; but on the whole it was a model of Ukraine beauty, luxuriant, full of character and defiance. His splendid dress also distinguished this hero of the steppe from the princes dressed in skins. Bogun wore a tunic of silver brocade and a scarlet kontush, which color was worn by all the Pereyaslav Cossacks. His loins were girt with a silken sash from which depended a rich sabre; but the sabre and the dress paled before the Turkish dagger