

"Yes; and now from the prince."

"What news?"

"Battle to-morrow. The enemy are widening the embankment, building bridges over the Stira and Sluch, and on the morrow wish to come to us without fail."

"What did the prince say to that?"

"The prince said: 'All right!'"

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing. He gave no order to hinder them, and axes are chopping; they will work till morning."

"Did you get informants?"

"I captured seven. All confessed that they have heard of Hmelnitski, — that he is coming, but probably far away yet. What a night!"

"Yes, you can see as in the day. And how do you feel after the fall?"

"My bones are sore. I am going to thank our Hercules and then sleep, for I am tired. If I could doze a couple of hours — good-night!"

"Good-night!"

"Go you to sleep also," said Skshetuski to Zagloba; "for it is late, and there will be work to-morrow."

"And the next day a journey," said Zagloba.

They turned, said their prayers, and then lay down near the fire.

Soon the fires began to go out one after another. Silence embraced the camp; but the moon cast on the men silver rays, with which it illumined every little while new groups of sleepers. The silence was broken only by the universal, mighty snoring, and the call of the sentinels watching the camp.

But sleep did not close the heavy lids of the soldiers long. Scarcely had the first dawn whitened the shadows of night when the trumpets in every corner of the camp thundered the *reveille*.

An hour later the prince, to the great astonishment of the knights, drew back along the whole line.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

BUT it was the retreat of a lion needing room for a spring.

The prince purposely allowed Krivonos to cross so as to inflict on him the greater defeat. In the very beginning of the battle he had the cavalry turned and urged on as if in flight, seeing which the men of the lower country and the mob broke their ranks to overtake and surround him. Then Yeremi turned suddenly, and with his whole cavalry struck them at once so terribly that they were unable to resist. The prince's troops pursued them five miles to the crossing, then over the bridges, the embankment, and two miles and a half to the camp, cutting and killing them without mercy. The hero of the day was the sixteen-year-old Pan Aksak, who gave the first blow and produced the first disorder. Only with such an army, old and trained, could the prince use such stratagems, and feign flight which in any other ranks might become real. This being the case, the second day ended still more disastrously for Krivonos than the first. All his field-pieces were taken, and a number of flags, — among them several royal flags captured by the Cossacks at Korsun. If the infantry of Koritski and Osinski with the cannon of Vurtsel could have followed the cavalry, the camp would have been taken at a blow. But before they came up it was night, and the enemy had already retreated a considerable distance, so that it was impossible to reach them. But Zatsvilikhovski captured half the camp, and with it enormous supplies of arms and provisions. The crowd seized Krivonos twice, wishing to give him up to the prince; and the promise of an immediate return to Hmelnitski barely sufficed to save him. He fled therefore with the remaining half of his tabor, with a decimated army, beaten and in despair, and did not halt till he reached Makhnovka, where when Hmelnitski came up, in the moment of his first anger, he ordered him to be chained by the neck to a cannon.

But when his first anger had passed the Zaporojian hetman remembered that the unfortunate Krivonos had covered Volynia with blood, captured Polonnoe, and sent thousands of nobles to the other world, left their bodies without burial,



and had been victorious everywhere till he met Yeremi. For these services the Zaporojian hetman took pity on him, and not only ordered him to be freed immediately from the cannon, but restored him to command, and sent him to Podolia to new conquests and slaughters.

The prince now announced to his army the rest so much desired. In the last battle it had suffered considerable losses, especially at the storming of the tabor by the cavalry, behind which the Cossacks defended themselves with equal stubbornness and adroitness. Five hundred soldiers were killed; Colonel Mokrski, severely wounded, died soon after; Pan Kushel, Ponyatovski, and young Aksak were shot, but not dangerously; and Zagloba, becoming accustomed to the throng, took his place manfully with the others, struck twice with a flail, he fell on his back, and being unable to move, lay as dead in Skshetuski's wagon.

Fate hindered the plan of going to Bar; for they could not start immediately, especially since the prince had sent Pan Yan, at the head of a number of troops, as far as Zaslay, to exterminate the bands of peasants assembled there. The knight went without mentioning Bar to the prince, and during five days burned and slaughtered till he cleared the neighborhood.

At last, even the soldiers became wearied beyond measure by the uninterrupted fighting, distant expeditions, ambuscades, and watching; he decided therefore to return to the prince, who, as he was informed, had gone to Tarnopol.

On the eve of his return he stopped at Sukhojintsi, on the Khomor. He disposed his soldiers in the village, took his lodgings for the night in a peasant's cottage, and because he was greatly wearied from labor and want of rest, fell asleep at once, and slept like a stone all night.

About morning, when half asleep, half awake, he began to doze and dream. Wonderful images were in movement before his eyes. It seemed to him that he was in Lubni, that he had never left the place, that he was sleeping in his room in the armory, and that Jendzian, as was his wont in the morning, was bustling around with clothes and preparing for his master's rising. Gradually, however, consciousness began to scatter the phantoms. He remembered that he was in Sukhojintsi, not in Lubni. Still the form of his servant did not dissolve in mist, and Pan Yan saw him continually sitting under the window, occupied in oiling armor-straps, which had shrunk consid-

erably from the heat. But he still thought that it was a vision of sleep, and closed his eyes again. After a while he opened them. Jendzian was sitting under the window.

"Jendzian," called Skshetuski, "is that you, or is it your ghost?"

The young fellow, frightened by the sudden call, dropped the breastplate on the floor with a clatter, spread his arms, and said: "Oh, for God's sake! why do you scream, my master, that I am like a ghost? I am alive and well!"

"And you have come back?"

"But have you sent me off?"

"Come here to me; let me embrace you."

The faithful youth fell upon the floor, and caught Skshetuski by the knees. Skshetuski kissed him on the forehead with joy, and repeated: "You are alive, you are alive!"

"Oh, my master, I cannot speak from joy that I see you again in health! You shouted so that I let the breastplate fall. The straps have shrunk up,—it is clear that you have had no one. Praise be to thee, O God! Oh, my dear master!"

"When did you come back?"

"Last night."

"Why did n't you wake me up?"

"Why should I wake you up? I came early to take your clothes."

"Where did you come from?"

"From Gushchi."

"What were you doing there? What has happened to you? Tell me."

"Well, you see the Cossacks came to Gushchi, which belongs to the voevoda of Bratslav, to plunder and burn, and I was there earlier, for I went there with Father Patroni Lasko, who took me to Hmelnitski from Gushchi; for the voevoda sent him to Hmelnitski with letters. I went back with him, therefore, and at that time the Cossacks were burning Gushchi; and they killed Father Patroni for his love to us, and no doubt they would have killed the voevoda too, if he had been there, though he belongs to their church and is their great benefactor—"

"But speak clearly and don't confuse things, for I cannot understand. You have been with the Cossacks, then, and spent some time with Hmelnitski. Is that true?"

"Yes, with the Cossacks; for when they took me in Chigirin they thought I was one of their men. Now put



on your clothes, my master! Dress — Oh, Lord bless me, everything you have is worn out, so there is nothing to lay hands on. But don't be angry with me because I did not deliver in Rozlogi the letter which you wrote in Kudák. That rascal, Bogun, took it from me, and had it not been for that fat noble I should have lost my life."

"I know, I know. It is not your fault, That fat noble is in the camp. He has told me everything just as it was. He has also stolen from Bogun the lady, who is in good health and living at Bar."

"Praise be to God for that! I knew too that Bogun didn't get her. Then of course the wedding is not far away?"

"It is not. From here we shall go by orders to Tarnopol, and from there to Bar."

"Thanks be to God on high! He will surely hang himself, that Bogun; but a witch has already foretold him that he will never get her of whom he is thinking, and that a Pole will have her. That Pole is surely you."

"How do you know this?"

"I heard it. I must tell you everything in order, and do you dress, my master, for they are cooking breakfast for you. When I was going in the boat from Kudák we were a long time sailing, for it was against the current, and besides the boat got injured, and we had to repair it. We were going on then, going on, my master, going on —"

"Go on! go on!" interrupted Skshetuski, impatiently.

"And we came to Chigirin; and what happened to me there you know already."

"I do."

"I was lying there in the stable without a sight of God's world. And then Hmelnitski came immediately after the departure of Bogun, with a tremendous Zaporozhian force. And as the Grand Hetman had previously punished a great many Chigirin people for their love to the Zaporozhians, many of them were killed and wounded. Therefore the Cossacks thought that I was from Chigirin. They didn't kill me, but gave me necessary provisions and care, and didn't let the Tartars take me, though they let them do everything else. When I came to myself I began to think what I was to do. Those rascals by this time had gone to Korsún and defeated the hetmans. Oh, my master, what my eyes saw is not to be described. They concealed nothing from me, knew no shame, because they took me for one of themselves. I was thinking whether to flee or not, but I saw it would be safer

to remain until a better opportunity should offer itself. When they began to bring in from the battlefield at Korsún cloths, silver, plate, precious stones, oh, my master, my heart nearly burst, and my eyes almost came out of my head. Such robbers! — they sold six silver spoons for a thaler, and later for a quart of vodka; a golden button or brooch or a hat cockade you might buy with a pint. Then I thought to myself: 'Why should I sit idle? Let me make something. With God's help I will return some time to the Jendzians at Podlesia, where my parents are living. I will give this to them, for they have a lawsuit with the Yavorskis, which has been going on now for fifty years, and they have nothing to continue it with.' I bought then so much stuff of every kind that it took two horses to carry it. This was the consolation of my sorrows, for I was terribly grieved on your account."

"Oh, Jendzian, you are always the same; you must have profit out of everything."

"What is the harm, if God has blessed me? I do not steal; and if you gave me a purse for the road to Rozlogi, here it is. I ought to return it, for I didn't go to Rozlogi."

Saying this, the young fellow unbuckled his belt, took out the purse, and placed it before the knight. Skshetuski smiled and said, —

"Since you had such good luck, you are surely richer than I; but keep the purse."

"I thank you very humbly. I have collected a little, with God's favor. My father and mother will be glad, and my grandfather, who is now ninety years old. But they will continue their lawsuit with the Yavorskis till the last penny, and send them out with packs on their backs. You will also be the gainer, for I shall not mention that belt you promised me in Kudák, though it suited me well."

"Yes, for you have already reminded me! Oh, such a son of a —! A regular insatiable wolf! I don't know where that belt is; but if I promised, I will give you, if not that one, another."

"I thank you, my master," said he, embracing Skshetuski's knees.

"No need of that! Go on; tell what happened!"

"The Lord then sent me some profit among the robbers. But I was tormented from not knowing what had happened to you, and lest Bogun had carried off the lady; till they brought me word that he was lying in Cherkasi barely alive,



wounded by the prince's men. I went to Cherkasi, since, as you are aware, I know how to make plasters and dress wounds. The Cossacks knew that I could do this. Well, Donyets, a colonel, sent me to Cherkasi, and went with me himself to nurse that robber. There a burden fell from my heart, for I heard that our young lady had escaped with that noble. I went then to Bogun. I was thinking, 'Will he know me or not?' But he was lying in a fever, and at first didn't know me. Later on he knew me, and said, 'You were going with a letter to Rozlogi?' 'Yes,' I answered. Then he said again, 'I struck you in Chigirin?' 'Yes.' 'Then you serve Pan Skshetuski?' 'I am serving no one now,' I replied. 'I had more evil than good in that service, therefore I chose to go to the Cossacks for freedom; and I am nursing you now for ten days, and am restoring you to health.' He believed me, and became very confidential. I learned from him that Rozlogi was burned, that he had killed the two princes. The other Kurtsevichi wished at first to go to our prince, but could not, and escaped to the Lithuanian army. But the worst was when he remembered that fat noble. Then, my master, he gnashed his teeth like a man cracking nuts."

"Was he long sick?"

"Long, long. His wounds healed quickly; then they opened again, for he didn't take care of them at first. I sat many a night with him, — may he be cut up! — as with some good man. And you must know, my master, that I swore by my salvation to take vengeance on him; and I will keep my oath, though I have to follow him all my life; for he maltreated me, an innocent person, and pounded me like a dog. And I am no trash, either! He must perish at my hand unless somebody else kills him first. I tell you that about a hundred times I had a chance, for often there was no one near him but me. I thought to myself, 'Shall I stab him or not?' But I was ashamed to kill him in his bed."

"It was praiseworthy of you not to kill him while sick and weak. That would be the deed of a peasant, not of a noble."

"And you know, my master, I had the same thought. I recollected too that when my parents sent me from home my grandfather blessed me, and said, 'Remember, you dunce, that you are a noble. Have ambition, serve faithfully; but don't let any man trample on you.' He said also that when a noble acts in peasant fashion the Lord

Jesus weeps. I recalled that phrase and I restrained myself. I had to let the chance pass. And now he was more confidential. More than once he asked, 'How shall I reward you?' And I said, 'Any way you wish.' And I cannot complain. He supplied me bountifully, and I took all he gave me; for I thought to myself, 'Why should I leave it in the hands of a robber?' On his account others gave me presents; for I tell you, my master, that there is no one so beloved as he, both by the men from below and the mob, though there is not a noble in the Commonwealth who has such contempt for the mob as he."

Here Jendzian began to twist his head as if he remembered and wondered at something; and after a while he said, —

"He is a strange man, and it must be confessed that he is altogether of noble nature. And that young lady, — but he loves her! Oh, mighty God, but he loves her! As soon as he was a little restored, Dontsova came to him to soothsay; but she told him nothing good. She is a brazen-faced giantess who is in friendship with devils, but she is a good-looking woman. When she laughs you would swear that a mare was neighing in the meadow. She has white teeth so strong that she might chew up a breastplate. When she walks the ground trembles. And, by the evident visitation of God, my good looks attracted her. Then she wouldn't pass without catching me by the head or the sleeve and jerking me. More than once she said, 'Come!' But I was afraid that the devil might break my neck if I went, and then I should lose all I had gathered; so I answered, 'Have n't you enough of others?' She said, 'You please me; though you are a stripling, you please me.' 'Be off, bass-viol!' I said. Then said she again, 'I like you, I like you!'"

"But you saw the soothsaying?"

"I did; and I heard it. There was a sort of smudge, a seething and squeaking, and shadows, so that I was frightened. She was standing in the middle of the room, looking stern, with sullen black brows, and repeated: 'The Pole is near her! the Pole is near her! Chili! huk! chili! the Pole is near her!' Then she poured wheat into a sieve, and looked. The grains went around like insects, and she repeated: 'Chili! huk! chili! the Pole is near her!' Oh, my master, if he were not such a robber it would be sad to look at his despair! After every answer she gave he used to grow white



as a shirt, fall on his back, clasp his hands over his head, twist and whine, and beg forgiveness of the princess that he came with violence to Rozlogi and killed her cousins. 'Where art thou, cuckoo, the loved one, the only one? I would have borne you in my arms, and now I cannot live without you! I will not approach you. I will be your slave if my eyes can only see you!' Then he remembered Zagloba again, ground his teeth, bit the bed, till sleep overpowered him; and in sleep he groaned and sighed."

"But did she never prophesy favorably for him?"

"I don't know, my master, for he recovered, and besides I left him. The priest Lasko came, so Bogun arranged that I should go with him to Gushchi. The robbers there found out that I had property of different kinds, and I too made no secret of the fact that I was going to help my parents."

"And they did n't rob you?"

"Perhaps they would have done so, but fortunately there were no Tartars there then, and the Cossacks did not dare to rob me from fear of Bogun. Besides they took me for one of their own. Even Hmelnitski himself ordered me to keep my ears open and report what would be said at the voevoda's, if there should be a meeting there. May the hangman light his way! I went then to Gushchi. Krivonos's detachments came and killed Father Lasko. I buried half my treasure, and escaped with the rest when I heard that you were near Zaslav. Praise be to God on high that you are in good health, and that you are preparing for your wedding. Then the end of every evil will come. I told those scoundrels who went against the prince our lord, that they would n't come back. They have caught it. Now maybe the war is over."

"How over? It is only beginning now with Hmelnitski."

"And you will fight after the wedding?"

"But did you think that cowardice would seize me at the wedding?"

"I did n't think that. I know that whomsoever it seizes, it won't seize you. I just ask; for when I take to my parents what I have collected I should like to go with you. Maybe God will help me to avenge my wrong on Bogun; for since it is not proper to take an unfair advantage, where shall I find him, if not in the field? He will not hide himself."

"What a determined fellow you are!"

"Let every one have his own. And as I promised to follow him to Turkey, it cannot be otherwise. And now I

will go with you to Tarnopol, and then to the wedding. But why do you go to Bar by Tarnopol? It is not on the road in any way."

"I must take home my regiment."

"I understand."

"Now give me something to eat," said Pan Yan.

"I've been looking out for that. The stomach is the main thing."

"After we have eaten we will start at once."

"Praise be to God for that, though my poor nag is worn to death."

"I will order them to give you a pack-horse; you can ride on it."

"Thank you humbly," said Jendzian, smiling with delight at the thought that including the purse and the belt a third present had come to him now.