

"Save yourselves! save yourselves!" was shouted in tones of terror.

All fled. Pan Longin and Volodyovski dropped into the saving ranks of the hussars. Zagloba threw himself on the neck of one and the other, and kissed them on the cheeks and eyes. Joy was choking him; but he restrained it, not wishing to show the softness of his heart, and cried, —

"Oh, the ox-drivers! I won't say that I love you, but I was alarmed about you! Is that the way you understand service, to lag in the rear? You ought to be dragged behind horses over the square by your feet. I shall be the first to tell the prince, that he may think of a punishment for you. Now we'll go to sleep. Thank God for that too! Those dog-brothers were lucky to run away before the bombs, for I should have cut them up like cabbage. I prefer fighting to seeing my friends die. We must have a drink to-night. Thank God for that too! I thought we should have to sing the requiem over you to-morrow. But I am sorry there was no fight, for my hand is itching awfully, though I gave them beans and onions in the shelters."

## CHAPTER LIX.

THE Poles had to raise new ramparts to render the earth-works of the Cossacks useless and make defence easier for their own reduced forces. They dug therefore all night after the storm. On this account the Cossacks were not idle. Having approached quietly in the dark night between Thursday and Friday, they threw up a second and much higher wall around the camp. All shouted at dawn, and began to fire at once, and four whole days and nights they continued firing. Much damage was done on both sides, for from both sides the best gunners emulated one another.

From time to time masses of Cossacks and the mob rushed to attack, but did not reach the ramparts. Only the musketry fire became hotter. The enemy, having strong forces, changed the divisions in action, leading some to rest and others to fight. But in the Polish camp there were no men for change; the same persons had to shoot, rush to the defence at any moment under danger of assaults, bury the dead, dig walls, and raise the ramparts for better defence. The besieged slept, or rather dozed, on the ramparts under fire, while balls were flying so thickly that every morning they could be swept from the square. For four days no one removed his clothing. The men got wet in the rain, dry in the sun, were burning in the daytime and chilled at night. During four days not one of them had anything warm in his mouth; they drank gorailka, mixing powder with it for greater strength; they gnawed cakes, and tore with their teeth hard dried meat; and all this in the midst of smoke and fire, the whistling of balls and the thunder of cannon. It was nothing to get struck on the head or body; a soldier tied a nasty bit of cloth around his bloody head and fought on. They were wonderful men, — with torn coats, rusty weapons, shattered muskets in their hands, eyes red from sleeplessness; ever on the alert, ever willing day and night, wet weather or dry; always ready for battle.

The soldiers were infatuated with their leader, with danger, with assaults, with wounds and death. A certain heroic exaltation seized their souls; their hearts became haughty, their minds callous. Horror became to them a



delight. Different regiments strove for pre-eminence in enduring hunger, sleeplessness, toil, daring, and fury. This was carried to such a degree that it was difficult to keep the soldiers on the walls; they were breaking out against the enemy as wolves ravenous from hunger against sheep. In all the regiments reigned a kind of wild joy. If a man were to mention surrender, he would be torn to pieces in the twinkling of an eye. "We want to die!" was repeated by every mouth.

Every command of the leader was carried out with lightning rapidity. Once it happened that the prince, in his evening tour of the ramparts, hearing that the fire of the quarter-regiment of Leshchinski was weakening, came to the soldiers, and asked: "Why don't you fire?"

"Our powder is gone; we have sent to the castle for more."

"You have it nearer!" said the prince, pointing to the enemy's trench.

He had scarcely spoken when the whole body sprang from the rampart, rushed to the enemy, and fell like a hurricane on the intrenchment. The Cossacks were clubbed with muskets and stabbed with pikes, four guns were spiked; and after half an hour the soldiers, decimated but victorious, returned with a considerable supply of powder in kegs and hunting-horns.

Day followed day. The Cossack approaches enclosed the Polish rampart with an ever-narrowing ring, and pushed into it like wedges into a tree. The firing was so close that without counting the assaults ten men a day fell in each battalion; the priests were unable to visit them with the sacrament. The besieged sheltered themselves with wagons, tents, skins, and suspended clothing. In the night they buried the dead wherever they happened to lie; but the living fought the more desperately over the graves of their comrades of the day before. Hmelnitski expended the blood of his people unsparingly, but each storm brought him only greater loss. He was astonished himself at the resistance. He counted only on this, — that time would weaken the hearts and strength of the besieged. Time did pass, but they showed an increasing contempt for death.

The leaders gave the example to their men. Prince Yermi slept on bare ground at the rampart, drank gorailka, and ate dried horse-flesh, suffering changes of weather and

toils beyond his lordly position. Konyetspolski and Sobieski led regiments to the sallies in person; in time of assault they exposed themselves without armor in the thickest rain of bullets. Even leaders who, like Ostrog, were lacking in military experience, and on whom the soldiers looked with distrust, appeared now, under the hand of Yermi, to become different men. Old Firlei and Lantskoronski slept also at the ramparts; and Pshiyemski put guns in order during the day, and at night dug under the earth like a mole, putting counter-mines beneath the mines of the enemy, throwing out approaches, or opening underground roads by which the soldiers came like spirits of death among the sleeping Cossacks.

Finally Hmelnitski determined to try negotiations, with the idea too that in the mean while he might accomplish something by stratagem. On the evening of July 24 the Cossacks began to cry from the trenches to the Poles to stop firing. The Zaporojians declared that the hetman wanted to see old Zatsvilikhovski. After a short consultation the commanders agreed to the proposition, and the old man went out of the camp.

The knights saw from a distance that caps were removed before him in the trenches; for Zatsvilikhovski, during the short period that he was commissioner, succeeded in gaining the good-will of the wild Zaporojians, and Hmelnitski himself respected him. The firing ceased. The Cossacks with their approaches were close to the ramparts, and the knights went down to them. Both sides were on their guard, but there was nothing unfriendly in those meetings. The nobles had always esteemed the Cossacks more than the common herd, and now, knowing their bravery and endurance in battle, they spoke with them on terms of equality as cavaliers with cavaliers. The Cossacks examined with wonder that impregnable nest of lions which checked all their power and that of the Khan. They began to be friendly, therefore, to talk and complain that so much Christian blood was flowing; finally they treated one another to tobacco and gorailka.

"Ah, gentlemen," said the old Zaporojians, "if you had stood up like this always, there would have been no Jóltya Vodi, Korsún, or Pilavtsi. You are real devils, not men, such as we have not seen yet in the world."

"Come to-morrow and the day after; you will always find us the same."



"We'll come; but thank God now for the breathing-spell! A power of Christian blood is flowing; but, anyhow, hunger will conquer you."

"The king will come before hunger; we have just eaten a hearty meal."

"If provisions fail us, we will go to your tabors," said Zagloba, with his hand on his hip.

"God grant Father Zatsvilikhovski to make some agreement with our hetman! If he does n't, we shall have an assault this evening."

"We are already tired of waiting for you."

"The Khan has promised that you'll all get your 'fate.'"

"And our prince has promised the Khan that he will drag him by the beard at his horse's tail."

"He is a wizard, but he can't do that."

"Better for you to go with our prince against the Pagans than to raise your hands against the authorities."

"H'm! with your prince! Nice work indeed!"

"Why do you revolt? The king will come; fear the king. Prince Yeremi was a father to you too—"

"Such a father, as Death is mother. The plague has not killed so many brave heroes as he."

"He will be worse; you don't know him yet."

"We don't want to know him. Our old men say that whatever Cossack looks him in the eye is given to death."

"It will be so with Hmelnitski."

"God knows what will be. This is sure, that it is not for them both to live in the white world. Our father says if you would give him up Yeremi he would let you all go free, and bow down to the king with all of us."

Here the soldiers began to frown and grit their teeth.

"Be silent, or we'll draw our sabres!"

"You Poles are angry, but you'll have your 'fate.'"

And so they conversed, sometimes pleasantly and sometimes with threats, which, in spite of them, burst out like thunder-peals. In the afternoon Zatsvilikhovski returned to the camp. There were no negotiations, and a cessation of arms was not obtained. Hmelnitski put forth monstrous demands,—that the prince and Konyetspolski should be given up to him. Finally he told over the wrongs of the Zaporozhians, and began to persuade Zatsvilikhovski to remain with him for good; whereupon the old knight was enraged, sprang up, and went away. In the evening followed an assault, which was repulsed with blood. The

whole camp was in fire for two hours. The Cossacks were not only hurled from the walls, but the infantry captured the first intrenchment, destroyed the embrasures, the shelters, and burned fourteen moving towers. Hmelnitski swore that night to the Khan that he would not withdraw while a man remained alive in the camp.

The next day at dawn brought fresh musketry-firing, digging under the ramparts, and a battle till evening with flails, scythes, sabres, stones, and clods of earth. The friendly feeling of the day before, and regret at the spilling of Christian blood gave way to still greater obstinacy. Rain began to fall in the morning. That day half-rations were issued to the soldiers, at which Zagloba complained greatly, but in general empty stomachs redoubled the rage of the Poles. They swore to fall one after the other, and not to surrender to the last breath. The evening brought new assaults from the Cossacks, disguised as Turks, lasting, however, but a short time. A night full of uproar and cries followed, "a very quarrelsome night." Firing did not cease for a moment. Both sides challenged each other; they fought in groups and pairs. Pan Longin went out to the skirmish, but no one would stand before him; they merely fired at him from a distance. But Stempovski covered himself with great glory, and also Volodyovski, who in single combat killed the famous partisan Dundar.

At last Zagloba himself came out, but only to encounters of the tongue. "After killing Burlai," said he, "I cannot meet every common scrub!" But in the encounter of tongues he found no equal among the Cossacks, and he brought them to despair; when covered with a good embankment he cried, as if under the ground, with a stentorian voice,—

"Sit here at Zbaraj, you clowns, but the Lithuanian soldiers are going down the Dnieper. They are saluting your wives and young women. Next spring you will find crowds of little Botvinians in your cottages, if you find the cottages."

The Lithuanian army was really descending the Dnieper, under Radzivil, burning and destroying, leaving only land and water. The Cossacks knowing this fell into a rage, and in answer hailed bullets on Zagloba, as a man shakes pears from a tree. But Zagloba took good care of his head behind the embankment, and cried again,—

"You have missed, you dog-spirits, but I did n't miss



Burlai. I am alone here; come to a duel with me! You know me! Come on, you clowns! shoot on while you have a chance, for next winter you'll be taking care of young Tartars in the Crimea, or making dams on the Dnieper. Come on, come on! I'll give a copper for the head of your Hmel. Give him a whack on the snout from me, from Zagloba, do you hear? Hei! you filthy fools, is it little of your carrion that lies on the field smelling like dead dogs? The plague sends her respects to you. To your forks, to your ploughs, to your boats, you scurvy villains! It is for you to tug salt and dried cherries against the current of the Dnieper, not to stand in our way."

The Cossacks had their laugh too at the "Panowie<sup>1</sup> who have one biscuit for three," and they were asked why they did not collect their taxes and tithes. But Zagloba got the upper hand in the disputes. These conversations rattled on, interrupted by curses and wild outbursts of laughter for whole nights, under fire and with more or less fighting. Then Pan Yanitski went out to negotiate with the Khan, who repeated again that all would meet their "fate," till the impatient envoy said: "You promised that long ago, but nothing has happened to us yet! Whoever comes for our heads will leave his own!" The Khan asked Prince Yeremi to meet his vizier in the field; but that was simply treachery, which was discovered, and the negotiations were finally broken off. All this time there was no intermission in the struggle,—assaults in the evening, during the day cannonading and musketry fire, sallies from the ramparts, encounters, hand-to-hand conflict of battalions, and wild attacks of cavalry.

A certain mad desire of fighting, of blood, and danger upheld the soldiers. They went to battle with songs, as if to a wedding. They had indeed become so accustomed to uproar and tumult that those divisions which were detailed to sleep slept soundly under fire, amidst thickly falling bullets. Provisions decreased every day, for the commanders had not supplied the camp sufficiently before the coming of the prince. The price of everything was enormously high, but those who had money and bought bread or gorailka shared it gladly with others. No one cared for the morrow, knowing that one of two things would not miss them,—either succor from the king, or death! They were equally ready for either, but more ready for battle. An un-

<sup>1</sup> "Panowie" is the plural of Pan.

heard-of case in history, tens meeting thousands with such resistance and such rage that each assault was a new defeat for the Cossacks! Besides, there was no day in which there were not several attacks from the ramparts on the enemy in his own trenches. Those evenings when Hmelnitski thought that weariness must overcome the most enduring and was quietly preparing an assault, joyful songs would come to his ears. Then he struck his hands on his legs with wonder, and thought, "In truth Yeremi is a greater wizard than any in the Cossack camp." Then he was furious, hurried to the fight, and poured out a sea of blood; for he saw that his star was beginning to pale before the star of the terrible prince.

In the tabor they sang songs about Yeremi, or in a low voice related things of him, which made the hair stand on the heads of the Cossacks. They said that he would appear at times in the night on the ramparts, and would grow up before one till his head was higher than the towers of Zbaraj; that his eyes were then like two moons, and the sword in his hand like that star of ill omen which God sometimes sends out in the sky for the destruction of men. It was said that when he shouted, the Poles who had fallen in battle rose up with clanking armor and took their places in the ranks with the living. Yeremi was in every mouth,—they sang about him, minstrels spoke of him, the old Zaporojians, the ignorant mob, and the Tartars; and in those conversations, in that hatred, in that superstitious terror there was a certain wild love with which that people of the steppes loved their bloody destroyer. Hmelnitski paled before him, not only in the eyes of the Khan and the Tartars, but in the eyes of his own people; and he saw that he must take Zbaraj, or the spell which he exercised would be dissipated, like darkness before the morning dawn,—he must trample that lion, or perish himself.

But the lion not only defended himself, but each day he issued more terrible from his lair. Neither stratagem, nor treachery, nor evident preponderance availed. Meanwhile the mob and the Cossacks began to murmur. It was difficult for them to sit in smoke and fire, in a rain of bullets, with the odor of corpses, in rain, in heat, before the face of death. But the valiant Cossacks did not fear toil, nor bad weather, nor storms with fire and blood and death; they feared "Yarema."