EPILOGUE.

But this tragedy of history was finished neither at Zborovo nor Zbaraj, and not even the first act of it. Two years later all Cossackdom rushed forth to do battle with the Commonwealth. Hmelnitski rose mightier than ever before; and with him marched the Khan of all the hordes, attended by the same leaders who had fought at Zbaraj, — the wild Tugai Bey, Urum Murza, Artimgirei, Nureddin, Galga, Amurat, and Subahazi. Pillars of flame and groans of men went on before them; thousands of warriors covered the fields, filled the forests; half a million of mouths sent forth shouts of war, and it seemed to men that the end of the Commonwealth had come.

But the Commonwealth had risen from its lethargy, had broken with the past policy of the chancellor, with treaties and negotiations. It was seen at last that the sword alone could win enduring peace. When the king therefore marched against the hostile inundation, there went with him an army of one hundred thousand soldiers and nobles, besides legions of irregulars and attendants.

No one living of the personages in the foregoing narrative was absent. Prince Yeremi Vishnyevetski was there with his whole division, in which were serving, as of old, Skshetuski and Volodyovski, with the volunteer Zagloba; both hetmans, Pototski and Kalinovski, were there, ransomed at that time from Tartar captivity. There were present also Stephen Charnetski, later on the crusher of Karl Gustav, the Swedish king; Pan Pshiyemski, commander of all the artillery; General Ubald; Pan Artsishevski; Marek Sobieski, starosta of Krasnostav, with his brother, Yan Sobieski, starosta of Yavorov, afterward King Yan III.; Ludvik Weyher, voevoda of Pomorie; Yakob, voevoda of Marienburg; Konyetspolski, the standard-bearer; Prince Dominik Zaslavski; the bishops, the dignitaries of the Crown, the senators, — the whole Commonwealth, with its supreme leader the king.

On the fields of Berestechko those many legions met at last, and there was fought one of the greatest battles of history, — a battle the echoes of which thundered through

all contemporary Europe. It lasted for three days. During the first two the fates wavered; on the third a general engagement decided the victory.

Prince Yeremi began that engagement; and he was seen in front of the entire left wing as, armorless and bareheaded, he swept like a hurricane over the field against those gigantic legions, formed of all the mounted heroes of the Zaporojie, and all the Tartars, — Crimean, Nogai, and Bélgorod, — of Silistrian and Rumelian Turks, Urumbalis, Janissaries, Serbs, Wallachians, Periotes, and other wild warriors assembled from the Ural, the Caspian, and the swamps of Mæotis to the Danube. As a river vanishes from the eye in the foaming waves of the sea, so vanished from the eye the regiments of the prince in that sea of the enemy. A cloud of dust moved on the plain like a mad whirlwind and covered the combatants.

The whole army and the king stood gazing on this superhuman struggle. Leshchinski, the vice-chancellor, raised aloft the wood of the Holy Cross, and with it blessed the perishing.

Meanwhile, on the other flank, the army of the king was approached by the whole Cossack tabor, two hundred thousand strong, bristling with cannon, which vomited fire. It was like a dragon pushing slowly out of the woods his gigantic claws.

But before the bulk of the enemy had issued from the dust in which Vishnyevetski's regiments had disappeared, horsemen began to drop away from their ranks, then tens, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of them, and rush to the height on which stood the Khan surrounded by his chosen guard. The wild legions fled in mad panic and disorder, pursued by the Poles. Thousands of Cossacks and Tartars strewed the battle-field; and among them lay, cut in two by a double-handed sword, the sworn enemy of the Poles but the trusty ally of the Cossacks, the wild and manful Tugai Bey.

The terrible prince had triumphed.

But the king looked with the eye of a leader on the triumph of the prince, and determined to break the hordes before the Cossacks could come up. All the forces moved, all the cannon thundered, scattering death and disorder. Soon the brother of the Khan, the lordly Amurat, fell struck in the breast with a bullet. The hordes roared with pain. Wounded in the very beginning of the battle, the

Khan looked on the field with dismay. From the distance came Pshiyemski in the midst of cannon and fire, and the king with the horse; from both flanks the earth thundered beneath the weight of the cavalry rushing to the fight.

Then Islam Girei quivered, left the field, and fled; and after him fled in disorder all the hordes, — the Wallachians, the Urumbali, the mounted warriors of the Zaporojie, the Silistrian Turks, and the renegades, — as a cloud before a whirlwind.

The despairing Hmelnitski caught up with the fugitives, wishing to prevail on the Khan to return to the battle; but the Khan, bellowing with rage at the sight of the hetman, ordered the Tartars to seize, bind him to a horse, and bear him away.

Now there remained but the Cossack tabor. The leader of that tabor, colonel of Krapivna, Daidyalo, knew not what had happened to Hmelnitski; but seeing the defeat and shameful flight of all the hordes, he stopped the advance, and pushing back with the tabor, halted in the marshy forks of the Pleshova.

Now a storm burst in the heavens, and measureless torrents of rain rushed down. "God was washing the land after a just battle." The rain lasted some days, and some days the armies of the king rested, wearied from struggles; during this time the tabor surrounded itself with ramparts, and was changed into a gigantic movable fortress.

With the return of fair weather began a siege, the most wonderful ever seen in life. The hundred thousand warriors of the king besieged the twice one hundred thousand Zaporojians. The king needed cannon, provisions, ammunition. The Zaporojians had immeasurable supplies of powder and all necessaries, and besides seventy cannon of heavier and lighter calibre. But at the head of the king's armies was the king, and the Cossacks had not Hmelnitski. The armies of the king were strengthened by a recent victory; the Cossacks were in doubt of themselves.

Several days passed; hope of the return of Hmelnitski and the Khan disappeared. Then negotiations began. The Cossack colonels came to the king, and beat the forehead to him, asking for pardon; they visited the senators' tents, seizing them by their garments, promising to get Hmelnitski even from under the earth and deliver him to the king.

The heart of Yan Kazimir was not opposed to forgiveness. He wished to let the rabble return to their homes

if all the officers were surrendered; these he determined to keep till Hmelnitski should be rendered up. But such an agreement was not to the mind of the officers, who, from the enormity of their offences, had no hope of forgiveness. Therefore in time of negotiations battles continued, desperate sallies, and every day Polish and Cossack blood flowed in abundance. The Cossacks fought in the daytime with bravery and the rage of despair; but at night whole clouds of them hung round the camp of the king, howling dismally for pardon.

Daidyalo was inclined to compromise, and was willing to give his head as a sacrifice to the king, if he could only ransom the army and the people. But dissension rose in the Cossack camp. Some wished to surrender, others to defend themselves to the death; but all were thinking how to escape from the tabor. To the boldest, however, this seemed impossible. The tabor was surrounded by the forks of the river and by immense swamps. Defence was possible for whole years, but to retreat only one road was open, — through the armies of the king. Of that road no one in the camp thought.

Negotiations, interrupted by battles, dragged on lazily. Dissensions among the Cossacks became greater and more frequent. In one of these Daidyalo was deposed from leadership, and a new man chosen. His name gave fresh strength to the fallen spirits of the Cossacks, and striking a loud echo in the camp of the king, roused in some hearts forgotten memories of past sorrows and misfortunes. The name of the new leader was Bogun. He had already occupied a lofty position among the Cossacks in council, and in action the general voice indicated him as the successor of Hmelnitski.

Bogun, foremost of the Cossack colonels, stood with the Tartars at Berestechko at the head of fifty thousand men. He took part in the three days' cavalry fight, and defeated with the Khan and the hordes by Yeremi, he succeeded in bringing out of the defeat the greater part of his forces and finding shelter in the camp. Then after Daidyalo the party opposed to conciliation gave him chief command, hoping that he was the one man able to save the tabor and the army.

In truth the young leader would not hear of negotiations. He wanted battle and blood, even if he had to drown in that blood himself. But soon he saw that with his troops it

was vain to think of passing with armed hand over the bodies of the king's army. Therefore he grasped after other means.

History has preserved the memory of those matchless efforts which to contemporaries seemed worthy of a giant, and which might have saved the army and the mob.

Bogun determined to pass through the bottomless swamp of the Pleshova, and build over those quagmires a bridge of such make that all the besieged might cross. Whole forests began then to fall under the axes of the Cossacks and sink in the swamp. Wagons, tents, coats, sheepskins were thrown in, and the bridge extended day by day. It appeared that there was nothing impossible to that leader.

The king deferred the assault, from aversion to bloodshed. But seeing these gigantic works, he recognized that there was no other way, and ordered the trumpets to sound in the evening for the final struggle.

No one knew of that intention in the Cossack camp, and the bridge lengthened all night as before. In the morning Bogun went forth at the head of the officers to examine the work.

It was Monday, July 7, 1651. The morning of that day rose pale, as if from fright; the dawn was bloody in the east; the sun appeared, red, sickly; a sort of bloody reflection lighted the woods and forests. From the Polish camp they were driving the horses to pasture; the Cossack tabor sounded with the voices of awakened men. Fires were lighted, the morning meal prepared. All saw the departure of Bogun, his retinue and the cavalry going with him, by the aid of which he intended to drive away the voevoda of Bratslav, who had occupied the rear of the tabor and was injuring the Cossack works with his cannon.

The crowd looked on the departure quietly, and even with hope in their hearts. Thousands of eyes followed the young commander, and thousands of mouths said: "God bless thee, my falcon!"

The leader, the retinue, and the cavalry receded gradually from the tabor, came to the edge of the forest, glittered once more in the early sunlight, and began to disappear in the thicket. Then some awful, terrified voice shouted, or rather howled, at the gate of the tabor: "Save yourselves, men!"

"The officers are fleeing!" roared hundreds and thousands of voices. The roar passed through the crowd, as when a whirlwind strikes a pine-wood; and then a terrible, unearthly cry burst forth from two hundred thousand throats: "Save yourselves! Save yourselves! The Poles! The officers are fleeing!" Masses of men rose at once, like a mad torrent. Fires were trodden out, wagons and tents overturned, palings broken to pieces, men trampled and suffocated. Piles of bodies barred the road. They rushed over corpses, amidst howls, shouts, uproar, groans. Crowds poured from the square, burst on to the bridge, stuck in the swamp; the drowning seized one another with convulsive embraces, and crying to heaven for mercy, sank in the cold moving swamp. On the bridge began a battle and slaughter for place. The waters of the Pleshova were filled with bodies. The Nemesis of history took terrible payment for Pilavtsi with Berestechko.

The awful shouts came to the ears of the young leader, and he knew at once what had happened. But in vain did he return at that moment to the tabor; in vain did he turn to meet the crowd with hands raised to heaven. His voice was lost in the roar of thousands. The terrible river of fugitives bore him away, with his horse, his retinue, and all the cavalry, and carried him on to destruction.

The armies of the king were amazed at the sight of this movement, which some mistook at first for a desperate attack. But it was difficult not to believe the eyes of all. A few moments later, when their amazement had passed, all the regiments, without waiting even for command, rushed upon the enemy. First went like a whirlwind the dragoon regiment; in the front of it Volodyovski, with sabre above his head.

The day of vengeance, defeat, and judgment had come, Whoever was not trampled or drowned went under the sword. The rivers were so filled with blood, that it could not be told whether blood or water flowed in them. The bewildered crowds, still more disordered, began to trample and push one another into the water, and drown. Death filled those awful forests, and reigned in them the more terribly since strong divisions began to defend themselves with rage. Battles were fought in the swamp, on the stumps, in the field. The voevoda of Bratslav cut off retreat to the fugitives. In vain did the king give orders to restrain the soldiers. Mercy had perished; and the slaughter lasted till night, — a slaughter such as the oldest warriors did not remember, and at the recollection of which the hair rose on their heads in later times.

When at last darkness covered the earth, the victors themselves were terrified at their work. No "Te Deum" was sung, and not tears of joy, but of regret and sorrow, flowed from the eyes of the king.

So ended the first act in the drama of which Hmelnitski was the author.

But Bogun did not lay down his head with others in that day of horror. Some say that, seeing the defeat, he was the first to save himself by flight; others, that a certain knight of his acquaintance saved him. No one was able to reach the truth. This alone is certain, that in succeeding wars his name came out frequently among the names of the most noted leaders of the Cossacks. A shot from some vengeful hand struck him a few years later, but even then his last day did not come. After the death of Prince Vishnyevetski, from military toils, when the domains of Lubni fell away from the body of the Commonwealth, Bogun obtained possession of the greater part of their area. It was said that at last he would not recognize Hmelnitski over him. Hmelnitski himself, broken, cursed by his own people, sought aid from abroad; but the haughty Bogun refused every guardianship, and was ready to defend his Cossack freedom with the sword.

It was said, too, that a smile never appeared on the lips of this strange man. He lived not in Lubni, but in a village which he raised from its ashes, and which was called Rozlogi.

Intestine wars survived him, and continued for a long time; then came the plague and the Swedes. The Tartars were almost continual visitors in the Ukraine, carrying legions of people into captivity. The Commonwealth became a desert; a desert the Ukraine. Wolves howled on the ruins of former towns, and a land once flourishing became a mighty graveyard. Hatred grew into the hearts and poisoned the blood of brothers.

NOTES.

POLISH ALPHABET.

SINCE the Polish alphabet has many peculiar phonetic combinations which are difficult to one who does not know the language, it was decided to transliterate the names of persons and places in which such combinations occur in this book. The following are the letters and combinations which are met with most frequently: —

Polish Letters.	English Sounds.
c	*ts*
cz	*ch* in "chief"
sz	*sh* in "ship"
szcz	*shch*
rz	*r* followed by the French *j*
w	*v*
ż	*j* in French

In this transliteration *ch* retains its ordinary English sound. *Kh* is used as the German *ch*, or the Gaelic *ch* in "loch;" so is *h*, as in Hmelnitski, and a few names in which it is used at the beginning and preceding a consonant, where it has the power of the German *ch*. *J* is the French *j*; the vowels *e*, *i*, *u*, are, respectively, *ai* in "bait," *ee* in "beet," *oo* in "pool," when long; when short, "bet," "bit," "put" would represent their values.

The following names will illustrate the method of this transliteration: —

Polish Form of Name.	Form in Transliteration.
Potocki	Pototski
Kulczinski	Kulchinski
Gdeszinski	Gdeshinski
Leszczinski	Leshchinski
Rzendzian	Jendzian
Woronczenko	Voronchenko
Żabkowski	Jabkovski

In Jendzian the initial *R* has been omitted, on account of the extreme difficulty of its sound to any one not a Pole. In Skrzetuski, a very difficult name also, *sh* has been used instead of the French *j*,