COSSACK TALES BY NICHOLAS GOGOL

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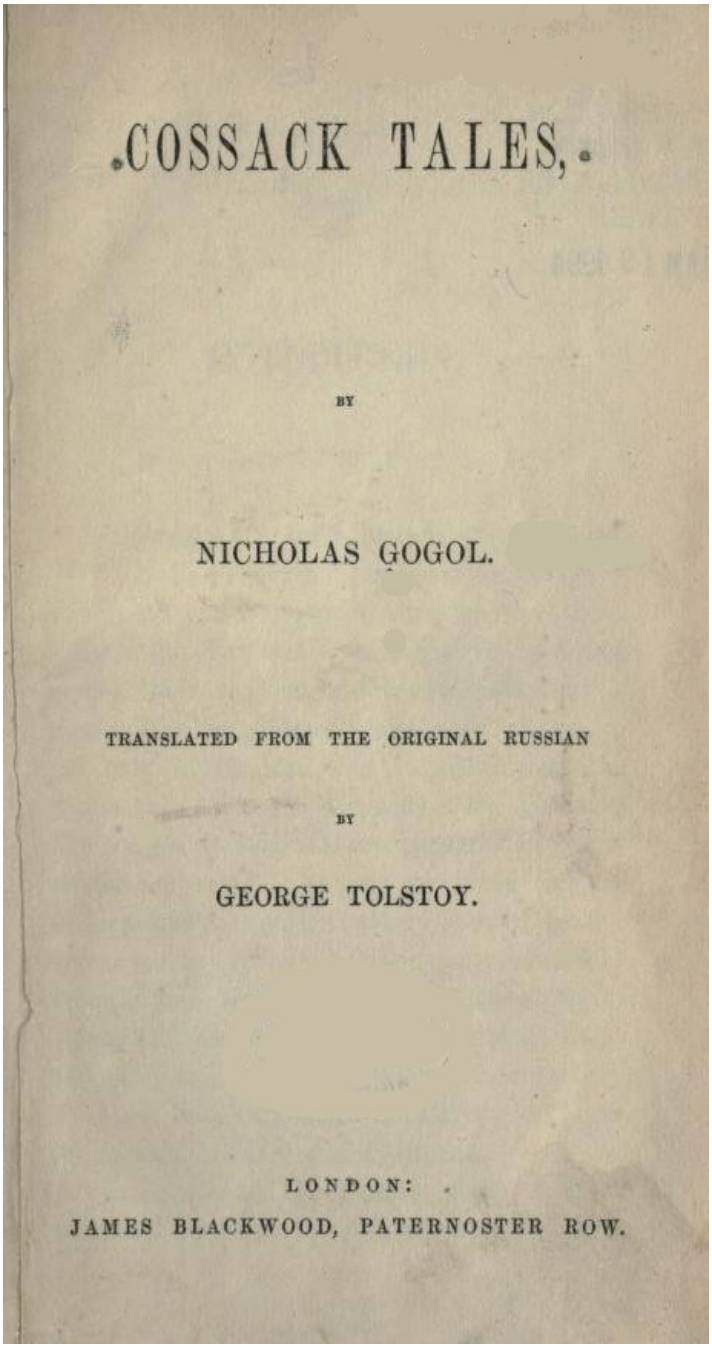

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BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN

BY

GEORGE TOLSTOY.

LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION.

A historical sketch placed before a work of fiction must seem, to many, a very inconsistent thing, and yet the title of the present volume, "COSSACK TALES," obliges the translator to give a short account of this sometime warlike race. Such an account is the more wanted, as not only in England, but in all Europe, the notion exists that the Cossacks were something like a Deus ex machinâ, emerging from space at the moment requisite to put a stop to the triumphs if Napoleon I., to drive back to their respective homes the motley array of the twenty nations he brought into Russia, to pitch their tents in the Champs Élysées, to put all things right in Paris, and then to vanish once more into space, where, for more than four centuries, Europe had never so much as perceived their existence.

The invasion of the Tartars in the middle of the thirteenth century took place when Russia was torn asunder by two kindred and yet hostile branches of the house of Rurick: the younger branch had settled in the northern (at the present time the middle) part of the country; the elder, after many struggles and reverses, had succeeded in regaining its inheritance, the ancient metropolis Kieff, and the whole of the southern principalities. Both branches bore a revengeful remembrance of their mutual feuds, and while the elder viewed with jealousy the gradual rise of the northern princes, the latter envied the firm grasp with which the southern princes clutched their long disputed sway. Hence it came that, when hordes of Tartars overran the northern principalities, the princes of the South lent no ear to the entreaties of their northern brethren for help. Hence, also, the reason of these latter remaining inert and submissive to their recent conquerors, the Tartars, when those conquerors laid waste the fertile territories which

extended along the south of Russia.

Soon afterwards, the trans-Carpathian parts of Russia, Red Russia, i.e., Galicia, Lodomeria, &c., ceased to be any longer accounted as forming part of Russia. The marshy tracts of land to the east of Poland, White Russia, formed a new and distinct power, Lithuania, soon destined to merge into Poland. The north of Russia, Great Russia, had yet two centuries more to endure the yoke of the Tartars. At this time Southern or Little Russia, called also Ukraine (i.e., the borders), gave birth to a new race, the Cossacks.

The princes of Southern Russia had forsaken their subjects, and gone into Lithuania to seek for a less disturbed dominion than that over a country exposed to the incessant depredations of the Crimean Tartars, and converted into the battle-field of these Tartars with the Russians and the Poles. Their subjects were thus left behind without anybody to look to for protection, or for guidance, in defence of their homes, and revenge for their country being annually wasted by fire and sword by their Crimean neighbours. Reduced to despair at seeing their homes burnt to ashes, their wives and children carried away by those savage invaders, to suffer all the consequences of their rude slavery, these men, to speak in the words of Gogol, "Left orphans, and seeing their country left like a widow after the loss of a mighty husband, held out their hands to one another to be brothers," and this brotherhood gave rise to the Cossacks, whose name for a Russian, even to this day, embodies every idea of the utmost freedom, [1] and who ever since have been ready to fight at the first notice of their country or of their faith being in danger.

At first, they sought a refuge in the wooded islands of the Dnieper, amidst the rapids of this river, and, no doubt, first dwelt under the canopy of heaven amidst the trunks of the trees which they felled for building their huts. This may, perhaps, account for the community assuming the name of Zaporoghian Ssiecha,[2] a name which has become inseparable from the idea of fight and slaughter, of deeds of valour and of cruelty. Having no means of livelihood, they, of course, resolved to procure them at the expense of those by whom they were brought to this desperate situation. They had learnt from their own experience that a good sabre was more to be depended upon than a plough, and that labour and industry were of no avail at such times when everything at any moment might be taken by him who dealt the heavier blow. As all who have seen the worst of miseries, and have nothing to lose in the world, whose life is one of incessant peril, they knew no fear—for them death had lost its horrors. No women were permitted to dwell amongst them; no tears were shed in memory of those who fell in battle or were led away captive; but their exploits were repeatedly sung in the Cossacks' circles, and excited revenge in the hearts of the older, emulation in the hearts of the younger.

In a community thus formed, no laws could be enforced, no regular partition into regiments, companies, &c., could take place. They chose for their chief some one amongst themselves, whose hand had been seen to deal the heaviest blows in battle, whose hair had blanched amidst warlike exploits, and who had become remarkable for his daring and his cunning in their unsophisticated mode of warfare. To this chief they gave the title of Ataman.[3] Eventually with the increase in numbers of their community, they divided themselves into koorens,[4] each of which chose for itself a koorennoï ataman,[5] subordinate to the Ataman of the Ssiecha, who was called Koschevoï Ataman;[6] to the latter (very often an illiterate man) a writer or secretary, a judge, and some other officers for transacting the public business of the Ssiecha, were appointed. But these dignitaries held their offices only as long as it pleased their electors; at the first summons of any drunken fellow who chose to beat the kettle-drum in the public square of the Ssiecha, and bring a complaint against the Ataman before the Rada (i. e., the whole assembled Ssiecha), the Ataman and his colleagues were sure to be deposed and new ones elected in their stead. Not so during a campaign: then the Koschevoï Ataman assumed dictatorial power, decreed death and granted life at his pleasure, and nobody, under pain of death, might resist his commands or bring a complaint against him till the return to the Ssiecha.

When the Ssiecha had attained this degree of development, the kings of Poland, who, at the instigation of the Jesuits, had endeavoured to enforce upon Little Russia the tenets of Popery under the disguise of the so-called Union, had already, under show of protection, garrisoned the most important cities of this country with Polish troops, and sought (though always unavailingly) to make its elective chief or prince, the hetman, a delegate of their power and a mere tool of their pleasure. Consequently, the jealousy of the Cossacks (for this name had been assumed by the inhabitants of all Ukraine) was already aroused against the Poles, but when they saw the haughty Polish lords treat their religion with contempt, shut up their churches, and give the keys to Jews, who levied taxes on each baptism, marriage, or burial: then was it that the whole of the Little Russians, summoning their brethren of the Zaporoghian Ssiecha to their help, began those wars with Poland which continued uninterrupted till the middle of the seventeenth century. The history of those wars, on the part of the Poles, is but a repetition of the horrors perpetrated by the Spaniards in the New World, by the Inquisition in Spain, &c., in a word, by savage fanaticism everywhere when led by the priests of Rome. On the part of the Cossacks the reprisals were not less terrible, although the latter, while exterminating every Pole, male or female, young or old, put them to immediate death by the sword, fire, or water, and never attained the Popish refinements of torturing their prisoners, of flaying them alive, boiling them in oil, roasting them in brazen oxen, &c.

The Zaporoghians, who had parted from their brethren, when these latter had submitted to the Poles, united themselves again to those brethren, now once more free, now once more Cossacks, and from this time the existence of the Ssiecha as a separate community seems to have ceased; it became incorporated in Little Russia and remained nothing more than a standing encampment of Cossacks, ever ready at the command of the hetman of Little Russia. With Little Russia, it submitted itself to its co-religionary Russian Czar Alexis (1654), and, with Little Russia, it remained true to the Emperor Peter I. when on the field of Poltava (1709). Hetman Mazeppa proved traitor to him. But by degrees, as the civilization of Western Europe spread in Russia, and a more regular mode of administration was enforced in Little Russia, the Zaporoghian Cossacks began to grow disaffected. At last, when Catherine II. annexed to her empire the kingdom of Poland, and achieved the conquest of the Crimea and all the north-western part of the sea-board of the Black Sea, the Ssiecha had no longer any reason to prolong its existence, as it lost its position of an outpost against the foes of the country, and became surrounded by Russian possessions. Some of the Zaporoghians were loth to submit to the legislature and administration which the Czarina framed for her empire. Headed by their Ataman Nekrassoff, they fled to Turkey, and the existence of the Ssiecha ceased with the sound of their horsehoofs dying away in the distance.

This brief sketch sufficiently proves that the Zaporoghian Cossacks had nothing in common with the Cossacks of the present day. The latter form a standing militia, living on their own lands situated oh the southern and eastern borders of Russia. They are bound to maintain at their own cost a fixed number of regiments of horse and foot, and are governed by their respective atamans. The principal of these Cossacks are, those of the Don, whose ataman was the renowned Platoff; those of the Black Sea (Czernomortzy); of the Caucasus; of Astrakhan; of Orenburg; and of the Ural, one of whom was Poogachoff, the pseudo-Peter III.; of Siberia; and a recently formed corps of the Trans-Baikalian Cossacks, having the guardianship of the Russian frontier towards China.

"THE NIGHT OF CHRISTMAS EVE," is a series of comic scenes taken from the life of the peasants in Little Russia in the last century.

"TARASS BOOLBA," is a graphic, lively, and, what is more, a historically true picture of the state of the Zaporoghian Ssiecha at the beginning of the religious wars with Poland.

The original tales were written in Russian, mixed up, especially in the conversations, with the native idiom of the author, who was a Little Russian. Now, although, as Sir Jerome Horsey[7] reports, Queen

Elizabeth boasted, when speaking of the Russian language, that "she could quicklie lern it," yet it has always proved a stumbling block to foreigners, and few, if any, Englishmen can appreciate at its full value the peculiarities of "this famoust and most copius language in the worlde," especially in conjunction with the Little Russian idiom, which even some Russians do not understand. In a translation, of course, many of the beauties of the original must disappear, particularly those which depend upon elegance of style, and this was one of the qualities of Gogol. But Gogol had one quality besides, that gave him a prominent place amongst authors, makes him till now the most popular writer in Russia, and caused his death to be lamented as an irretrievable loss to Russian literature: it was his art of making his reader join him in laughter whenever he laughs, in sorrow whenever he weeps, and to influence the feelings of his reader with every feeling he feels himself, and, above all, with that one which predominates in his heart-enthousiastic love of his native country.

The translator will be happy if, in remaining faithful to the original, he has been so fortunate as to give even a faint outline of its beauties.

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[1]"Free as a Cossack" is a common phrase in Russia.

[2]Zaporoghian means "beyond the rapids." Ssiecha has two meanings: first, a place in a forest where trees have be en cut down; secondly, a slaughter, the thickest of a fight.

[3]Ataman (a rank still preserved amongst the Russian irregular troops and signifying chief) is a title quite different from that of hetman, who was the elective prince of Little Russia. The last who bore the title of hetman was the favourite and supposed husband of the Empress Elizabeth, Count Razumoffsky. Count Platoff, who led the Cossacks in the war against Napoleon I. is miscalled hetman by foreigners: he was in fact only ataman.

[4]Kooren is derived from a word signifying "to smoke." It designated the abode of a company whose fires smoked in common, and who had one common store of provisions.

[5]A koorennoï ataman was the chief of a kooren, and had to superintend the distribution of the victuals, and the division of the spoil taken by his kooren.

[6]Literally, "Chief of the encampment."

[7]Sir Jerome Horsey, originally a clerk of the "Company of English Merchants Adventurers," trading with Muscovy, had been occasionally employed as diplomatic messenger by Queen Elizabeth and by Czar Ivan (the Terrible), and his son Czar Theodore. His travels, published some years ago, contain much highly interesting information about the commercial intercourse between England and Russia in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

COSSACK TALES.

THE NIGHT OF CHRISTMAS EVE:

A LEGEND OF LITTLE RUSSIA.

BY NICHOLAS GOGOL.

The last day before Christmas had just closed. A bright winter night had come on, stars had appeared, and the moon rose majestically in the heavens to shine upon good men and the whole of the world, so that they might gaily sing carols and hymns in praise of the nativity of Christ. The frost had grown more severe than during the day; but, to make up for this, everything had become so still that the crisping of the snow under foot might be heard nearly half a verst round. As yet there was not a single group of young peasants to be seen under the windows of the cottages; the moon alone peeped stealthily in at them, as if inviting the maidens, who were decking themselves, to make haste and have a run on the crisp snow. Suddenly, out of the chimney of one of the cottages, volumes of smoke ascended in clouds towards the heavens, and in the midst of those clouds rose, on a besom, a witch.

If at that time the magistrate of Sorochinsk[1] had happened to pass in his carriage, drawn by three horses, his head covered by a lancer cap with sheepskin trimming, and wrapped in his great cloak, covered with blue cloth and lined with black sheepskin, and with his tightly plaited lash, which he uses for making the driver drive faster—if this worthy gentleman had happened to pass at that time, no doubt he would have seen the witch, because there is no witch who could glide away without his seeing her. He knows to a certainty how many sucking pigs each swine brings forth in each cottage, how much linen lies in each box, and what each one has pawned in the brandy-shop out of his clothes or his household furniture. But the magistrate of Sorochinsk happened not to pass; and then, what has he to do with those out of his jurisdiction? he has his own circuit. And the witch by this time had risen so high that she only looked like a little dark spot up above; but wherever that spot went, one star after another disappeared from heaven. In a short time the witch had got a whole sleeveful of them. Some three or four only remained shining. On a sudden, from the opposite side, appeared another spot, which went on growing, spreading, and soon became no longer a spot. A short-sighted man, had he put, not only spectacles, but even the wheels of a britzka on his nose, would never have been able to make out what it was. In front, it was just like a German;[2] a narrow snout, incessantly turning on every side, and smelling about, ended like those of our pigs, in a small, round, flattened end; its legs were so thin, that had the village elder got no better, he would have broken them to pieces in the first squatting-dance. But, as if to make amends for these deficiencies, it might have been taken, viewed from behind, for the provincial advocate, so much was its long pointed tail like the skirt of our dress-coats. And yet, a look at the goat's beard under its snout, at the small horns sticking out of its head, and at the whole of its figure, which was no whiter than that of a chimney sweeper, would have sufficed to make any one guess that it was neither a German nor a provincial advocate, but the Devil in person, to whom only one night more was left for walking about the world and tempting good men to sin. On the morrow, at the first stroke of the church bell, he was to run, with his tail between his legs, back to his quarters. The devil then, as the devil it was, stole warily to the moon, and stretched out his hand to get hold of it; but at the very same moment he drew it hastily back again, as if he had burnt it, shook his foot, sucked his fingers, ran round on the other side, sprang at the moon once more, and once more drew his hand away. Still, notwithstanding his being baffled, the cunning devil did not desist from his mischievous designs. Dashing desperately forwards, he grasped the moon with both hands, and, making wry faces and blowing hard, he threw it from one hand to the other, like a peasant who has taken a live coal in his hand to light his pipe. At last, he hastily hid it in his pocket, and went on his way as if nothing had happened. At Dikanka,[3] nobody suspected that the devil had stolen the moon. It is true that the village scribe, coming out of the brandy-shop on all fours, saw how the moon, without any apparent reason,

danced in the sky, and took his oath of it before the whole village, but the distrustful villagers shook their heads, and even laughed at him. And now, what was the reason that the devil had decided on such an unlawful step? Simply this: he knew very well that the rich Cossack[4] Choop[5] was invited to an evening party at the parish clerk's, where he was to meet the elder, also a relation of the clerk, who was in the archbishop's chapel, and who wore a blue coat and had a most sonorous basso profondo, the Cossack Sverbygooze, and some other acquaintances; where there would be for supper, not only the kootia,[6] but also a varenookha,[7] as well as corn-brandy, flavoured with saffron, and divers other dainties. He knew that in the mean time Choop's daughter, the belle of the village, would remain at home; and he knew, moreover, that to this daughter would come the blacksmith, a lad of athletic strength, whom the devil held in greater aversion than even the sermons of Father Kondrat. When the blacksmith had no work on hand, he used to practise painting, and had acquired the reputation of being the best painter in the whole district. Even the Centurion[8] had expressly sent for him to Poltava, for the purpose of painting the wooden palisade round his house. All the tureens out of which the Cossacks of Dikanka ate their borsch,[9] were adorned with the paintings of the blacksmith. He was a man of great piety, and often painted images of the saints; even now, some of them may be seen in the village church; but his masterpiece was a painting on the right side of the church-door; in it he had represented the Apostle Peter, at the Day of Judgment, with the keys in his hand, driving the evil spirit out of hell; the terrified devil, apprehending his ruin, rushed hither and thither, and the sinners, freed from their imprisonment, pursued and thrashed him with scourges, logs of wood, and anything that came to hand. All the time that the blacksmith was busy with this picture, and was painting it on a great board, the devil used all his endeavours to spoil it; he pushed his hand, raised the ashes out of the forge, and spread them over the painting; but, notwithstanding all this, the work was finished, the board was brought to the church, and fixed in the wall of the porch. From that time the devil vowed vengeance on the blacksmith. He had only one night left to roam about the world, but even in that night he sought to play some evil trick upon the blacksmith. For this reason he, had resolved to steal the moon, for he knew that old Choop was lazy above all things, not quick to stir his feet; that the road to the clerk's was long, and went across back lanes, next to mills, along the churchyard, and over the top of a precipice; and though the varenookha and the saffron brandy might have got the better of Choop's laziness on a moonlight night, yet, in such darkness, it would be difficult to suppose that anything could prevail on him to get down from his oven[10] and quit his cottage. And the blacksmith, who had long been at variance with Choop, would not on any account, in spite even of his strength, visit his daughter in his presence.

So stood events: hardly had the devil hidden the moon in his pocket, when all at once it grew so dark that many could not have found their way to the brandy-shop, still less to the clerk's. The witch, finding herself suddenly in darkness, shrieked aloud. The devil coming near her, took her hand, and began to whisper to her those same things which are usually whispered to all womankind.

How oddly things go on in this world of ours! Every one who lives in it endeavours to copy and ape his neighbour. Of yore there was nobody at Mirgorod[11] but the judge and the mayor, who in winter wore fur cloaks covered with cloth; all their subordinates went in plain uncovered too-loops;[12] and now, only see, the deputy, as well as the under-cashier, wear new cloaks of black sheep fur covered with cloth. Two years ago, the village-scribe and the town-clerk bought blue nankeen, for which they paid full sixty copecks the arsheen.[13] The sexton, too, has found it necessary to have nankeen trousers for the summer, and a striped woollen waistcoat. In short, there is no one who does not try to cut a figure. When will the time come when men will desist from vanity? One may wager that many will be astonished at finding the devil making love. The most provoking part of it is, to think that really he fancies himself a beau, when the fact is, that he has such a phiz, that one is ashamed to look at it—such a phiz, that, as one of my friends says, it is the abomination of abominations; and yet, he, too, ventures to make love!

But it grew so dark in the sky, and under the sky, that there was no possibility of further seeing what passed between the devil and the witch.

"So thou sayest, kinsman, that thou hast not yet been in the clerk's new abode?" said the Cossack Choop, stepping out of his cottage, to a tall meagre peasant in a short tooloop, with a well grown beard, which it was evident had remained at least a fortnight untouched by the piece of scythe, which the peasants use instead of a razor,[14] "There will be a good drinking party," continued Choop, endeavouring to smile at these words, "only we must not be too late;" and with this Choop drew still closer his belt, which was tightly girded round his tooloop, pulled his cap over his eyes, and grasped more firmly his whip, the terror of importunate dogs; but looking up, remained fixed to the spot. "What the devil! look, kinsman!"

"What now?" uttered the kinsman, also lifting up his head.

"What now? Why, where is the moon gone?"

"Ah! sure enough, gone she is."

"Yes, that she is!" said Choop, somewhat cross at the equanimity of the kinsman, "and it's all the same to thee."

"And how could I help it?"

"That must be the trick of some evil spirit," continued Choop, rubbing his mustachios with his sleeve. "Wretched dog, may he find no glass of brandy in the morning! Just as if it were to laugh at us; and I was purposely looking out of window as I was sitting in the room; such a splendid night; so light, the snow shining so brightly in the moonlight; everything to be seen as if by day; and now we have hardly crossed the threshold, and behold it is as dark as blindness!"

And Choop continued a long time in the same strain, moaning and groaning, and thinking all the while what was to be done. He greatly wished to have a gossip about all sorts of nonsense at the clerk's lodgings, where, he felt quite sure, were already assembled the elder, the newly arrived basso profondo, as well as the tar-maker Nikita, who went every fortnight to Poltava on business, and who told such funny stories that his hearers used to laugh till they were obliged to hold their belts. Choop even saw, in his mind's eye, the varenookha brought forth upon the table. All this was most enticing, it is true; but then the darkness of the night put him in mind of the laziness which is so very dear to every Cossack. Would it not be well now to lie upon the oven, with his feet drawn up to his body, quietly enjoying a pipe, and listening through a delightful drowsiness to the songs and carols of the gay lads and maidens who would come in crowds under the windows? Were Choop alone, there is no doubt he would have preferred the latter; but to go in company would not be so tedious or so frightful after all, be the night ever so dark; besides, he did not choose to appear to another either lazy or timorous; so, putting an end to his grumbling, he once more turned to the kinsman. "Well, kinsman; so the moon is gone?"

"She is."

"Really, it is very strange! Give me a pinch of thy snuff. Beautiful snuff it is; where dost thou buy it, kinsman?"

"I should like to know what is so beautiful in it;" answered the kinsman, shutting his snuff-box, made of birch bark and adorned with different designs pricked on it; "it would not make an old hen sneeze."

"I remember," continued Choop in the same strain, "the defunct pot-house keeper, Zoozooha, once brought me some snuff from Niegin.[15] That was what I call snuff—capital snuff! Well, kinsman, what are we to do? The night is dark."

"Well, I am ready to remain at home," answered the kinsman taking hold of the handle of the door.

Had not the kinsman spoken thus, Choop would have decidedly remained at home; but now, there was something which prompted him to do quite the contrary. "No, kinsman; we will go; go we must;" and whilst saying this, he was already cross with himself for having thus spoken. He was much displeased at having to walk so far on such a night, and yet he felt gratified at having had his own way, and having gone contrary to the advice he had received. The kinsman, without the least expression of discontent on his face, like a man perfectly indifferent to sitting at home or to taking a walk, looked round, scratched his shoulder with the handle of his cudgel, and away went the two kinsmen.

Let us now take a glance at what Choop's beautiful daughter was about when left alone. Oxana has not yet completed her seventeenth year, and already all the people of Dikanka, nay, even the people beyond it, talk of nothing but her beauty. The young men are unanimous in their decision, and have proclaimed her the most beautiful girl that ever was, or ever can be, in the village. Oxana knows this well, and hears everything that is said about her, and she is, of course, as capricious as a beauty knows how to be. Had she been born to wear a lady's elegant dress, instead of a simple peasant's petticoat and apron, she would doubtless have proved so fine a lady that no maid could have remained in her service. The lads followed her in crowds; but she used to put their patience to such trials, that they all ended by leaving her to herself,and taking up with other girls, not so spoiled as she was. The blacksmith was the only one who did not desist from his love suit, but continued it, notwithstanding her ill-treatment, in which he had no less share than the others.

When her father was gone, Oxana remained for a long time decking herself, and coquetting before a small looking-glass, framed in tin. She could not tire of admiring her own likeness in the glass. "Why do men talk so much about my being so pretty?" said she, absently, merely for the sake of gossiping aloud. "Nonsense; there is nothing pretty in me." But the mirror, reflecting her fresh, animated, childish features, with brilliant dark eyes, and a smile most inexpressibly bewitching, proved quite the contrary. "Unless," continued the beauty, holding up the mirror, "may be, my black eyebrows and my dark eyes are so pretty that no prettier are to be found in the world; as for this little snub nose of mine, and my cheeks and my lips, what is there pretty in them? or, are my tresses so very beautiful? Oh!one might be frightened at them in the dark; they seem like so many serpents twining round my head. No, I see very well that I am not at all beautiful!" And then, on a sudden, holding the looking-glass a little further off, "No," she exclaimed, exultingly, "No, I really am pretty! and how pretty! how beautiful! What joy shall I bring to him whose wife I am to be! How delighted will my husband be to look at me! He will forget all other thoughts in his love for me! He will smother me with kisses."What joy shall I bring to him whose wife I am to be! How delighted will my husband be to look at me! He will forget all other thoughts in his love for me! He will smother me with kisses."What joy shall I bring to him whose wife I am to be! How delighted will my husband be to look at me! He will forget all other thoughts in his love for me! He will smother me with kisses."

"A strange girl, indeed," muttered the blacksmith who had in the mean time entered the room, "and no small share of vanity has she got! There she stands for the last hour, looking at herself in the glass, and cannot leave off, and moreover praises herself aloud."

"Yes, indeed lads! is any one of you a match for me?" went on the pretty flirt; "look at me, how gracefully I walk; my bodice is embroidered with red silk, and what ribbons I have got for my hair! You have never seen any to be compared to them! All this my father has bought on purpose for me, that I may marry the smartest fellow that ever was born!" and so saying, she laughingly turned round and saw the blacksmith. She uttered a cry and put on a severe look, standing straight before him. The blacksmith stood quite abashed. It would be difficult to specify the meaning of the strange girl's somewhat sunburnt face; there was a degree of severity in it, and, in this same severity, somewhat of raillery at the blacksmith's bashfulness, as well as a little vexation, which spread an almost imperceptible blush over her features.All this was so complicated, and became her so admirably Well,

that the best thing to have done would have been to give her thousands and thousands of kisses.

"Why didst thou come hither?" she began. "Dost thou wish me to take up the shovel and drive thee from the house? Oh! you, all of you, know well how to insinuate yourselves into our company! You scent out in no time when the father has turned his back on the house. Oh! I know you well! Is my box finished?"

"It will be ready, dear heart of mine—it will be ready after the festival. Couldst thou but know how much trouble it has cost me—two nights did I never leave my smithy. Sure enough, thou wilt find no such box anywhere, not even belonging to a priest's wife. The iron I used for binding it! I did not use the like even for the centurion's tarataika,[16] when I went to Poltava. And then, the painting of it. Wert thou to go on thy white feet round all the district, thou wouldst not find such another painting. The whole of the box will sparkle with red and blue flowers. It will be a delight to look upon it. Be not angry with me. Allow me—be it only to speak to thee—nay, even to look at thee."

"Who means to forbid it? speak and look," and she sat down on the bench, threw one more glance at the glass, and began to adjust the plaits on her head, looked at her neck, at her new bodice, embroidered with silk, and a scarcely visible expression of self-content played over her lips and cheeks and brightened her eyes.

"Allow me to sit down beside thee," said the blacksmith.

"Be seated," answered Oxana, preserving the same expression about her mouth and in her looks.

"Beautiful Oxana! nobody will ever have done looking at thee—let me kiss thee!" exclaimed the blacksmith recovering his presence of mind, and drawing her towards him, endeavoured to snatch a kiss; her cheek was already at an imperceptible distance from the blacksmith's lips, when Oxana sprang aside and pushed him back. "What wilt thou want next? When one has got honey, he wants a spoon too. Away with thee! thy hands are harder than iron, and thou smellest of smoke thyself; I really think thou hast besmeared me with thy soot." She then took the mirror and once more began to adorn herself.

"She does not care for me," thought the blacksmith, hanging down his head. "Everything is but play to her, and I am here like a fool standing before her and never taking my eyes off her. Charming girl. What would I not do only to know what is passing in her heart. Whom does she love? But no, she cares for no one, she is fond only of herself, she delights in the sufferings she causes to my own poor self, and my grief prevents me from thinking of anything else, and I love her as nobody in the world ever loved or is likely to love."

"Is it true that thy mother is a witch?" asked Oxana laughing; and the blacksmith felt as if everything within him laughed too, as if that laugh had found an echo in his heart and in all his veins; and at the same time he felt provoked at having no right to cover with kisses that pretty laughing face.

"What do I care about my mother! Thou art my mother, my father—all that I hold precious in the world! Should the Czar send for me to his presence and say to me, 'Blacksmith Vakoola,' ask of me whatever I have best in my realm—I'll give it all to thee; I'll order to have made for thee a golden smithy, where thou shalt forge with silver hammers.' 'I'll none of it,' would I answer the Czar. 'I'll have no precious stones, no golden smithy, no, not even the whole of thy realm—give me only my Oxana!'"

"Now, only see what a man thou art! But my father has got another idea in his head; thou'lt see if he does not marry thy mother!"[17] said Oxana with an arch smile. "But what can it mean? the maidens are not yet come—it is high time for carolling. I am getting dull."

"Never mind about them, my beauty!"

"But, of course, I do mind; they will doubtless bring some lads with them, and then, how merry we

shall be! I fancy all the droll stories that will be told!"

"So thou feelest merry with them?"

"Of course merrier than with thee. Ah! there is somebody knocking at the door; it must be the maidens and the lads!"

"Why need I stay any longer?" thought the blacksmith. "She laughs at me; she cares no more about me than about a rust-eaten horseshoe. But, be it so. I will at least give no one an opportunity to laugh at me. Let me only mark who it is she prefers to me. I'll teach him how to"—

His meditation was cut short by a loud knocking at the door, and a harsh "Open the door," rendered still harsher by the frost.

"Be quiet, I'll go and open it myself," said the blacksmith, stepping into the passage with the firm intention of giving vent to his wrath by breaking the bones of the first man who should come in his way.

The frost increased, and it became so cold that the devil went hopping from one hoof to the other, and blowing his fingers to warm his benumbed hands. And, of course, he could not feel otherwise than quite frozen: all day long he did nothing but saunter about hell, where, as everybody knows, it is by no means so cold as in our winter air; and where, with his cap on his head, and standing before a furnace as if really a cook, he felt as much pleasure in roasting sinners as a peasant's wife feels at frying sausages for Christmas. The witch, though warmly clad, felt cold too, so lifting up her arms, and putting one foot before the other, just as if she were skating, without moving a limb, she slid down as if from a sloping ice mountain right into the chimney. The devil followed her example; but as this creature is swifter than any boot-wearing beau, it is not at all astonishing that at the very entrance of the chimney, he went down upon the shoulders of the witch and both slipped down together into a wide oven, with pots all round it. The lady traveller first of all noiselessly opened the oven-door a little, to see if her son Vakoola had not brought home some party of friends; but there being nobody in the room, and only some sacks lying in the middle of it on the floor, she crept out of the oven, took off her warm coat, put her dress in order, and was quite tidy in no time, so that nobody could ever possibly have suspected her of having ridden on a besom a minute before.

The mother of the blacksmith Vakoola was not more than forty; she was neither handsome nor plain; indeed it is difficult to be handsome at that age. Yet, she knew well how to make herself pleasant to the aged Cossacks (who, by-the-bye, did not care much about a handsome face); many went to call upon her, the elder, Assip Nikiphorovitch the clerk (of course when his wife was from home), the Cossack Kornius Choop, the Cossack Kassian Sverbygooze. At all events this must be said for her, she perfectly well understood how to manage with them; none of them ever suspected for a moment that he had a rival. Was a pious peasant going home from church on some holiday; or was a Cossack, in bad weather, on his way to the brandy-shop; what should prevent him from paying Solokha a visit, to eat some greasy curd dumplings with sour cream, and to have a gossip with the talkative and good-natured mistress of the cottage? And the Cossack made a long circuit on his way to the brandy-shop, and called it "just looking in as he passed." When Solokha went to church on a holiday, she always wore a gay-coloured petticoat, with another short blue one over it, adorned with two gold braids, sewed on behind it in the shape of two curly mustachios. When she took her place at the right side of the church, the clerk was sure to cough and twinkle his eyes at her; the elder twirled his mustachios, twisted his crown-lock of hair round his ear, and said to his neighbour, "A splendid woman! a devilish fine woman!" Solokha nodded to every one, and every one thought that Solokha nodded to him alone. But those who liked to pry into other people's business, noticed that Solokha exerted the utmost of her civility towards the Cossack Choop.

Choop was a widower; eight ricks of corn stood always before his cottage: two strong bulls used to put their heads out of their wattled shed, gaze up and down the street, and bellow every time they caught a glimpse of their cousin a cow, or their uncle the stout ox; the bearded goat climbed up to the very roof, and bleated from thence in a key as shrill as that of the mayor, and teased the turkeys which were proudly walking in the yard, and turned his back as soon as he saw his inveterate enemies, the urchins, who used to laugh at his beard. In Choop's boxes there was plenty of linen, plenty of warm coats, and many old-fashioned dresses bound with gold braid; for his late wife had been a dashing woman. Every year, there was a couple of beds planted with tobacco in his kitchen-garden, which was, besides, well provided with poppies, cabbages, and sunflowers. All this, Solokha thought, would suit very well if united to her own household; she was already mentally regulating the management of this property when it should pass into her hands; and so she went on increasing in kindness towards old Choop. At the same time, to prevent her son Vakoola from making an impression on Choop's daughter, and getting the whole of the property (in which case she was sure of not being allowed to interfere with anything), she had recourse to the usual means of all women of her age—she took every opportunity to make Choop quarrel with the blacksmith. These very artifices were perhaps the cause that it came to be rumoured amongst the old women (particularly when they happened to take a drop too much at some gay party) that Solokha was positively a witch; that young Kiziakaloopenko had seen on her back a tail no bigger than a common spindle; that on the last Thursday but one she ran across the road in the shape of a black kitten; that once there had come to the priest a hog, which crowed like a cock, put on Father Kondrat's hat, and then ran away. It so happened that as the old women were discussing this point, there came by Tymish Korostiavoi, the herdsman. He could not help telling how, last summer, just before St. Peter's fast, as he laid himself down for sleep in his shed, and had put some straw under his head, with his own eyes he beheld the witch, with her hair unplaited and nothing on but her shift, come and milk her cows; how he was so bewitched that he could not move any of his limbs; how she came to him and greased his lips with some nasty stuff, so that he could not help spitting all the next day. And yet all these stories seem of a somewhat doubtful character, because there is nobody but the magistrate of Sorochinsk who can distinguish a witch. This was the reason why all the chief Cossacks waved their hands on hearing such stories. "Mere nonsense, stupid hags!" was their usual answer.

Having come out of the oven and put herself to rights, Solokha, like a good housewife, began to arrange and put everything in its place; but she did not touch the sacks: "Vakoola had brought them in —he might take them out again." In the mean time the devil, as he was coming down the chimney, caught a glimpse of Choop, who, arm in arm with his kinsman, was already a long way off from his cottage. Instantly, the devil flew out of the chimney, ran across the way, and began to break asunder the heaps of frozen snow which were lying all around. Then began a snow-storm. The air was all whitened with snow-flakes. The snow went rushing backwards and forwards, and threatened to cover, as it were with a net, the eyes, mouth, and ears of the pedestrians. Then the devil flew into the chimney once more, quite sure that both kinsmen would retrace their steps to Choop's house, who would find there the blacksmith, and give him so sound a thrashing that the latter would never again have the strength to take a brush in his hand and paint offensive caricatures.

As soon as the snow-storm began, and the wind blew sharply in his eyes, Choop felt some remorse, and, pulling his cap over his very eyes, he began to abuse himself, the devil, and his own kinsman. Yet his vexation was but assumed; the snow-storm was rather welcome to Choop. The distance they had still to go before reaching the dwelling of the clerk was eight times as long as that which they had already gone; so they turned back. They now had the wind behind them; but nothing could be seen through the whirling snow.

"Stop, kinsman, it seems to me that we have lost our way," said Choop, after having gone a little distance. "There is not a single cottage to be seen! Ah! what a storm it is! Go a little on that side,

kinsman, and see if thou canst not find the road; and I will seek it on this side. Who but the devil would ever have persuaded any one to leave the house in such a storm! Don't forget, kinsman, to call me when thou findest the road. Eh! what a lot of snow the devil has sent into my eyes!"

But the road was not to be found. The kinsman, in his long boots, started off on one side, and, after having rambled backwards and forwards, ended by finding his way right into the brandy-shop. He was so glad of it that he forgot everything else, and, after shaking off the snow, stepped into the passage without once thinking about his kinsman who had remained in the snow. Choop in the mean time fancied he had found out the road; he stopped and began to shout with all the strength of his lungs, but seeing that his kinsman did not come, he decided on proceeding alone.

In a short time he saw his cottage. Great heaps of snow lay around it and covered its roof. Rubbing his hands, which were numbed by the frost, he began to knock at the door, and in a loud tone ordered his daughter to open it.

"What dost thou want?" roughly demanded the blacksmith, stepping out.

Choop, on recognising the blacksmith's voice, stepped a little aside. "No, surely this is not my cottage," said he to himself; "the blacksmith would not come to my cottage. And yet—now I look at it again, it cannot be his. Whose then, can it be? Ah! how came I not to know it at once! it is the cottage of lame Levchenko, who has lately married a young wife; his is the only one like mine. That is the reason why it seemed so strange to me that I got home so soon. But, let me see, why is the blacksmith here? Levchenko, as far as I know, is now sitting at the clerk's. Eh! he! he! he! the blacksmith comes to see his young wife! That's what it is! Well, now I see it all!"

"Who art thou? and what hast thou to do lurking about this door?" asked the blacksmith, in a still harsher voice, and coming nearer.

"No," thought Choop, "I'll not tell him who I am; he might beat me, the cursed fellow!" and then, changing his voice, answered, "My good man, I come here in order to amuse you, by singing carols beneath your window."

"Go to the devil with thy carols!" angrily cried Vakoola. "What dost thou wait for? didst thou hear me? be gone, directly."

Choop himself had already the same prudent intention; but he felt cross at being obliged to obey the blacksmith's command. Some evil spirit seemed to prompt him to say something contrary to Vakoola.

"What makes thee shout in that way?" asked he in the same assumed voice; "my intention is to sing a carol, and that is all."

"Ah! words are not sufficient for thee!" and immediately after, Choop felt a heavy stroke fall upon his shoulders.

"Now, I see, thou art getting quarrelsome!" said he, retreating a few paces.

"Begone, begone!" exclaimed the blacksmith, striking again.

"What now!" exclaimed Choop, in a voice which expressed at the same time pain, anger, and fear. "I see thou quarrelest in good earnest, and strikest hard."

"Begone, begone!" again exclaimed the blacksmith, and violently shut the door.

"Look, what a bully!" said Choop, once more alone in the street. "But thou hadst better not come near me! There's a man for you! giving thyself such airs, too! Dost thou think there is no one to bring thee to reason? I will go, my dear fellow, and to the police-officer will I go. I'll teach thee who I am! I care not for thy being blacksmith and painter. However, I must see to my back and shoulders: I think there are

bruises on them. The devil's son strikes hard, it seems. It is a pity it's so cold, I cannot take off my fur coat. Stay a while, confounded blacksmith; may the devil break thy bones and thy smithy too! Take thy time—I will make thee dance, cursed squabbler! But, now I think of it, if he is not at home, Solokha must be alone. Hem! her dwelling is not far from here; shall I go? At this time nobody will trouble us. Perhaps I may. Ah! that cursed blacksmith, how he has beaten me!"

And Choop, rubbing his back, went in another direction. The pleasure which was in store for him in meeting Solokha, diverted his thoughts from his pain, and made him quite insensible to the snow and ice, which, notwithstanding the whistling of the wind, might be heard cracking all around. Sometimes a half-benignant smile brightened his face, whose beard and mustachios were whitened over by snow with the same rapidity as that displayed by a barber who has tyrannically got, hold of the nose of his victim. But for the snow which danced backwards and forwards before the eyes, Choop might have been seen a long time, stopping now and then to rub his back, muttering, "How painfully that cursed blacksmith has beaten me!" and then proceeding on his way.

At the time when the dashing gentleman, with a tail and a goat's beard, flew out of the chimney, and then into, the chimney again, the pouch which hung by a shoulder-belt at his side, and in which he had hidden the stolen moon, in some way or other caught in something in the oven, flew open, and the moon, availing herself of the opportunity, mounted through the chimney of Solokha's cottage and rose majestically in the sky. It grew light all at once; the storm subsided; the snow-covered fields seemed all over with silver, set with crystal stars; even the frost seemed to have grown milder; crowds of lads and lasses made their appearance with sacks upon their shoulders; songs resounded, and but few cottagers were without a band of carollers. How beautifully the moon shines! It would be difficult to describe the charm one feels in sauntering on such a night among the troops of maidens who laugh and sing, and of lads who are ready to adopt every trick and invention suggested by the gay and smiling night. The tightly-belted fur coat is warm; the frost makes one's cheeks tingle more sharply; and the Cunning One, himself, seems, from behind your back, to urge you to all kinds of frolics. A crowd of maidens, with sacks, pushed their way into Choop's cottage, surrounded Oxana, and bewildered the blacksmith by their shouts, their laughter, and their stories. Every one was in haste to tell something new to the beauty; softie unloaded their sacks, and boasted of the quantity of loaves, sausages, and curd dumplings which they had already received in reward for their carolling. Oxana seemed to be all pleasure and joy, went on chattering, first with one, then with another, and never for a moment ceased laughing. The blacksmith looked with anger and envy at her joy, and cursed the carolling, notwithstanding his having been mad about it himself in former times.

"Odarka," said the joyful beauty, turning to one of the girls, "thou hast got on new boots! Ah! how beautiful they are! all ornamented with gold too! Thou art happy, Odarka, to have a suitor who can make thee such presents; I have nobody who would give me such pretty boots!"

"Don't grieve about boots, my incomparable Oxana!" chimed in the blacksmith; "I will bring thee such boots as few ladies wear."

"Thou?" said Oxana, throwing a quick disdainful glance at him. "We shall see where thou wilt get such boots as will suit my foot, unless thou bringest me the very boots which the Czarina wears!"

"Just see what she has taken a fancy to now!" shouted the group of laughing girls.

"Yes!" haughtily continued the beauty, "I call all of you to witness, that if the blacksmith Vakoola brings me the very boots which the Czarina wears, I pledge him my word instantly to marry him."

The maidens led away the capricious belle.

"Laugh on, laugh on!" said the blacksmith, stepping out after them. "I myself laugh at my own folly. It is in vain that I think, over and over again, where have I left my wits? She does not love me—well,

God be with her! Is Oxana the only woman in all the world? Thanks be to God! there are many handsome maidens in the village besides Oxana. Yes, indeed, what is Oxana? No good housewife will ever be made out of her; she only understands how to deck herself. No, truly, it is high time for me to leave off making a fool of myself." And yet at the very moment when he came to this resolution, the blacksmith saw before his eyes the laughing face of Oxana, teasing him with the words—"Bring me, blacksmith, the Czarina's own boots, and I will marry thee!" He was all agitation, and his every thought was bent on Oxana alone.

The carolling groups of lads on one side, of maidens on the other, passed rapidly from street to street. But the blacksmith went on his way without noticing anything, and without taking any part in the rejoicings, in which, till now, he had delighted above all others.

The devil had, in the meanwhile, quickly reached the utmost limits of tenderness in his conversation with Solokha; he kissed her hand with nearly the same faces as the magistrate used when making love to the priest's wife; he pressed his hand upon his heart, sighed, and told her that if she did not choose to consider his passion, and meet it with due return, he had made up his mind to throw himself into the water, and send his soul right down to hell. But Solokha was not so cruel—the more so, as the devil, it is well known, was in league with her. Moreover, she liked to have some one to flirt with, and rarely remained alone. This evening she expected to be without any visitor, on account of all the chief inhabitants of the village being invited to the clerk's house. And yet quite the contrary happened. Hardly had the devil set forth his demand, when the voice of the stout elder was heard. Solokha ran to open the door, and the quick devil crept into one of the sacks that were lying on the floor. The elder, after having shaken off the snow from his cap, and drunk a cup of brandy which Solokha presented to him, told her that he had not gone to the clerk's on account of the snow-storm, and that, having seen a light in her cottage, he had come to pass the evening with her. The elder had just done speaking when there was a knock at the door, and the clerk's voice was heard from without. "Hide me wherever thou wilt," whispered the elder; "I should not like to meet the clerk." Solokha could not at first conceive where so stout a visitor might possibly be hidden; at last she thought the biggest charcoal sack would be fit for the purpose; she threw the charcoal into a tub, and the sack being empty, in went the stout elder, mustachios, head, cap, and all. Presently the clerk made his appearance, giving way to a short dry cough, and rubbing his hands together. He told her how none of his guests had come, and how he was heartily glad of it, as it had given him the opportunity of taking a walk to her abode, in spite of the snow-storm. After this he came a step nearer to her, coughed once more, laughed, touched her bare plump arm with his fingers, and said with a sly, and at the same time a pleased voice, "What have you got here, most magnificent Solokha?" after which words he jumped back a few steps.

"How, what? Assip Nikiphorovitch! it is my arm!" answered Solokha.

"Hem! your arm! he! he! he!" smirked the clerk, greatly rejoiced at his beginning, and he took a turn in the room.

"And what is this, dearest Solokha?" said he, with the same expression, again coming to her, gently touching her throat, and once more springing back.

"As if you cannot see for yourself, Assip Nikiphorovitch!" answered Solokha, "it is my throat and my necklace on it."

"Hem! your necklace upon your throat! he! he! he!" and again did the clerk take a walk, rubbing his hands.

"And what have you here, unequalled Solokha?"

We know not what the clerk's long fingers would now have touched, if just at that moment he had not heard a knock at the door, and, at the same time, the voice of the Cossack Choop.

"Heavens! what an unwelcome visitor!" said the clerk in a fright, "whatever will happen if a person of my character is met here! If it should reach the ears of Father Kondrat!" But, in fact, the apprehension of the clerk was of quite a different description; above all things he dreaded lest his wife should be acquainted with his visit to Solokha; and he had good reason to dread her, for her powerful hand had already made his thick plait[18] a very thin one. "In Heaven's name, most virtuous Solokha!" said he, trembling all over; "your goodness, as the Scripture saith, in St. Luke, chapter the thir—thir—there is somebody knocking, decidedly there is somebody knocking at the door! In Heaven's name let me hide somewhere!"

Solokha threw the charcoal out of another sack into the tub, and in crept the clerk, who, being by no means corpulent, sat down at the very bottom of it, so that there would have been room enough to put more than half a sackful of charcoal on top of him.

"Good evening, Solokha," said Choop, stepping into the room, "Thou didst not perhaps expect me? didst thou? certainly not; may be I hindered thee," continued Choop, putting on a gay meaning face, which expressed at once that his lazy head laboured, and that he was on the point of saying some sharp and sportive witticism. "May be thou wert already engaged in flirting with somebody! May be thou hast already some one hidden? Is it so?" said he; and delighted at his own wit, Choop gave way to a hearty laugh, inwardly exulting at the thought that he was the only one who enjoyed the favours of Solokha. "Well now, Solokha, give me a glass of brandy; I think the abominable frost has frozen my throat! What a night for a Christmas eve! As it began snowing, Solokha—-just listen, Solokha—as it began snowing—eh! I cannot move my hands; impossible to unbutton my coat! Well, as it began snowing"—

"Open!" cried some one in the street, at the same time giving a thump at the door.

"Somebody is knocking at the door!" said Choop, stopping in his speech.

"Open!" cried the voice, still louder.

"'Tis the blacksmith!" said Choop, taking his cap; "listen, Solokha!—put me wherever thou wilt! on no account in the world would I meet that confounded lad! Devil's son! I wish he had a blister as big as a haycock under each eye."

Solokha was so frightened that she rushed backwards and forwards in the room, and quite unconscious of what she did, showed Choop into the same sack where the clerk was already sitting. The poor clerk had to restrain his cough and his sighs when the weighty Cossack sat down almost on his head, and placed his boots, covered with frozen snow, just on his temples.

The blacksmith came in, without saying a word, without taking off his cap, and threw himself on the bench. It was easy to see that he was in a very bad temper. Just as Solokha shut the door after him, she heard another tap under the window. It was the Cossack Sverbygooze. As to this one, he decidedly could never have been hidden in a sack, for no sack large enough could ever have been found. In person, he was even stouter than the elder, and as to height, he was even taller than Choop's kinsman. So Solokha went with him into the kitchen garden, in order to hear whatever he had to say to her.

The blacksmith looked vacantly round the room, listening at times to the songs of the carolling parties. His eyes rested at last on the sacks:

"Why do these sacks lie here? They ought to have been taken away long ago. This stupid love has made quite a fool of me; to-morrow is a festival, and the room is still full of rubbish. I will clear it away into the smithy!" And the blacksmith went to the enormous sacks, tied them as tightly as he could, and would have lifted them on his shoulders; but it was evident that his thoughts were far away, otherwise he could not have helped hearing how Choop hissed when the cord with which the sack was tied,

twisted his hair, and how the stout elder began to hiccup very distinctly. "Shall I never get this silly Oxana out of my head?" mused the blacksmith; "I will not think of her; and yet, in spite of myself I think of her, and of her alone. How is it that thoughts come into one's head against one's own will? What,the devil! Why the sacks appear to have grown heavier than they were; it seems as if there was something else besides charcoal! What a fool I am! have I forgotten that everything seems to me heavier than it used to be. Some time ago, with one hand I could bend and unbend a copper coin, or a horse-shoe; and now, I cannot lift a few sacks of charcoal; soon every breath of wind will blow me off my legs. No," cried he, after having remained silent for a while, and coming to himself again, "shall it be said that I am a woman? No one shall have the laugh against me; had I ten such sacks, I would lift them all at once." And, accordingly, he threw the sacks upon his shoulders, although two strong men could hardly have lifted them. "I will take this little one, too," continued he, taking hold of the little one,at the bottom of which was coiled up the devil. "I think I put my instruments into it;" and thus saying, he went out of the cottage, whistling the tune:

"No wife I'll have to bother me."

Songs and shouts grew louder and louder in the streets; the crowds of strolling people were increased by those who came in from the neighbouring villages; the lads gave way to their frolics and sports. Often amongst the Christmas carols might be heard a gay song, just improvised by some young Cossack. Hearty laughter rewarded the improviser. The little windows of the cottages flew open, and from them was thrown a sausage or a piece of pie, by the thin hand of some old woman or some aged peasant, who alone remained in-doors. The booty was eagerly caught in the sacks of the young people. In one place, the lads formed a ring to surround a group of maidens; nothing was heard but shouts and screams; one was throwing a snow-ball, another was endeavouring to get hold of a sack crammed with Christmas donations. In another place,the girls caught hold of some youth, or put something in his way, and down he fell with his sack. It seemed as if the whole of the night would pass away in these festivities. And the night, as if on purpose, shone so brilliantly; the gleam of the snow made the beams of the moon still whiter.

The blacksmith with his sacks stopped suddenly. He fancied he heard the voice and the sonorous laughter of Oxana in the midst of a group of maidens. It thrilled through his whole frame; he threw the sacks on the ground with so much force that the clerk, sitting at the bottom of one of them, groaned with pain, and the elder hiccupped aloud; then, keeping only the little sack upon his shoulders, the blacksmith joined a company of lads who followed close after a group of maidens, amongst whom he thought he had heard Oxana's voice.

"Yes, indeed; there she is! standing like a queen, her dark eyes sparkling with pleasure! There is a handsome youth speaking with her; his speech seems very amusing, for she is laughing; but does she not always laugh?" Without knowing why he did it and as if against his will, the blacksmith pushed his way through the crowd, and stood beside her.

"Ah! Vakoola, here art thou; a good evening to thee!" said the belle, with the very smile which drove Vakoola quite mad. "Well, hast thou received much? Eh! what a small sack! And didst thou get the boots that the Czarina wears? Get those boots and I'll marry thee!" and away she ran laughing with the crowd.

The blacksmith remained riveted to the spot. "No, I cannot; I have not the strength to endure it any longer," said he at last. "But, Heavens! why is she so beautiful? Her looks, her voice, all, all about her makes my blood boil! No, I cannot get the better of it; it is time to put an end to this. Let my soul perish! I'll go and drown myself, and then all will be over." He dashed forwards with hurried steps, overtook the group, approached Oxana, and said to her in a resolute voice: "Farewell, Oxana! Take whatever bridegroom thou pleasest; make a fool of whom thou wilt; as for me, thou shalt never more

meet me in this world!" The beauty seemed astonished, and was about to speak, but the blacksmith waved his hand and ran away.

"Whither away, Vakoola?" cried the lads, seeing him run. "Farewell, brothers," answered the blacksmith. "God grant that we may meet in another world; but in this we meet no more! Fare you well! keep a kind remembrance of me. Pray Father Kondrat to say a mass for my sinful soul. Ask him forgiveness that I did not, on account of worldly cares, paint the tapers for the church. Everything that is found in my big box I give to the Church; farewell!"—and thus saying, the blacksmith went on running, with his sack on his back.

"He has gone mad!" said the lads. "Poor lost soul!" piously ejaculated an old woman who happened to pass by; "I'll go and tell about the blacksmith having hanged himself."

Vakoola, after having run for some time along the streets, stopped to take breath. "Well, where am I running?" thought he; "is really all lost? —I'll try one thing more; I'll go to the fat Patzuck, the Zaporoghian. They say he knows every devil, and has the power of doing everything he wishes; I'll go to him; 'tis the same thing for the perdition of my soul." At this, the devil, who had long remained quiet and motionless, could not refrain from giving vent to his joy by leaping in the sack. But the blacksmith thinking he had caught the sack with his hand, and thus occasioned the movement himself, gave a hard blow on the sack with his fist, and after shaking it about on his shoulders, went off to the fat Patzuck.

This fat Patzuck had indeed once been a Zaporoghian. Nobody, however, knew whether he had been turned out of the warlike community, or whether he had fled from it of his own accord.

He had already been for some ten, nay, it might even be for some fifteen years, settled at Dikanka. At first, he had lived as best suited a Zaporoghian; working at nothing, sleeping three-quarters of the day, eating not less than would satisfy six harvest-men, and drinking almost a whole pailful at once. It must be allowed that there was plenty of room for food and drink in Patzuck; for, though he was not very tall, he tolerably made up for it in bulk. Moreover, the trousers he wore were so wide, that long as might be the strides he took in walking, his feet were never seen at all, and he might have been taken t for a wine cask moving along the streets. This, may have been the reason for giving him the nick-name of "Fatty." A few weeks had hardly passed since his arrival in the village, when it came to be known that he was a wizard. If any one happened to fall ill, he called Patzuck directly; and Patzuck had only to mutter a few words to put an end to the illness at once. Had any hungry Cossack swallowed a fish-bone, Patzuck knew how to give him right skilfully a slap on the back, so that the fish-bone went where it ought to go without causing any pain to the Cossack's throat. Latterly, Patzuck was scarcely ever seen out of doors. This was perhaps caused by laziness, and perhaps, also, because to get through the door was a task which with every year grew more and more difficult for him. So the villagers were obliged to repair to his own lodgings whenever they wanted to consult him. The blacksmith opened the door, not without some fear. He saw Patzuck sitting on the floor after the Turkish fashion. Before him was a tub on which stood a tureen full of lumps of dough cooked in grease. The tureen was put, as if intentionally, on a level with his mouth. Without moving a single finger, he bent his head a little towards the tureen, and sipped the gravy, catching the lumps of dough with his teeth. "Well," thought Vakoola to himself, "this fellow is still lazier than Choop; Choop at least eats with a spoon, but this one does not even raise his hand!" Patzuck seemed to be busily engaged with his meal, for he took not the slightest notice of the entrance of the blacksmith, who, as soon as he crossed the threshold, made a low bow.

"I am come to thy worship, Patzuck!" said Vakoola, bowing once more. The fat Patzuck lifted his head and went on eating the lumps of dough.

"They say that thou art—I beg thy pardon," said the blacksmith, endeavouring to compose himself, "I do not say it to offend thee—that thou hast the devil among thy friends;" and in saying these words

Vakoola was already afraid he had spoken too much to the point, and had not sufficiently softened the hard words he had used, and that Patzuck would throw at his head both the tub and the tureen; he even stepped a little on one side and covered his face with his sleeve, to prevent it from being sprinkled by the gravy.

But Patzuck looked up and continued sipping.

The encouraged blacksmith resolved to proceed —"I am come to thee, Patzuck; God grant thee plenty of everything, and bread in good proportion!" The blacksmith knew how to put in a fashionable word sometimes; it was a talent he had acquired during his stay at Poltava, when he painted the centurion's palisade. "I am on the point of endangering the salvation of my sinful soul! nothing in this world can serve me! Come what will, I am resolved to seek the help of the devil. Well, Patzuck," said he, seeing that the other remained silent, "what am I to do?"

"If thou wantest the devil, go to the devil!" answered Patzuck, not giving him a single look, and going on with his meal.

"I am come to thee for this very reason," returned the blacksmith with a bow; "besides thyself, methinks there is hardly anybody in the world who knows how to go to the devil."

Patzuck, without saying a word, ate up all that remained on the dish. "Please, good man, do not refuse me!" urged the blacksmith. "And if there be any want of pork, or sausages, or buckwheat, or even linen or millet, or anything else—why, we know how honest folk manage these things. I shall not be stingy. Only do tell me, if it be only by a hint, how to find the way to the devil."

"He who has got the devil on his back has no great way to go to him," said Patzuck quietly, without changing his position.

Vakoola fixed his eyes upon him as if searching for the meaning of these words on his face. "What does he mean?" thought he, and opened his mouth as if to swallow his first word. But Patzuck kept silence. Here Vakoola noticed that there was no longer either tub or tureen before him, but instead of them there stood upon the floor two wooden pots, the one full of curd dumplings, the other full of sour cream. Involuntarily his thoughts and his eyes became riveted to these pots. "Well, now," thought he, "how will Patzuck eat the dumplings? He will not bend down to catch them like the bits of dough, and moreover, it is impossible; for they ought to be first dipped into the cream." This thought had hardly crossed the mind of Vakoola, when Patzuck opened his mouth, looked at the dumplings, and then opened it still wider. Immediately, a dumpling jumped out of the pot, dipped itself into the cream, turned over on the other side, and went right into Patzuck's mouth. Patzuck ate it, once more opened his mouth, and in went another dumpling in the same way. All Patzuck had to do was to chew and to swallow them. "That is wondrous indeed," thought the blacksmith, and astonishment made him also open his mouth; but he felt directly, that a dumpling jumped into it also, and that his lips were already smeared with cream; he pushed it away, and after having wiped his lips, began to think about the marvels that happen in the world and the wonders one may work with the help of the devil; at the same time he felt more than ever convinced that Patzuck alone could help him. "I will beg of him still more earnestly to explain to me—but, what do I see? to-day is a fast, and he is eating dumplings, and dumplings are not food for fast days![19] What a fool I am! staying here and giving way to temptation! Away, away!" and the pious blacksmith ran with all speed out of the cottage. The devil, who remained all the while sitting in the sack, and already rejoiced at the glorious victim he had entrapped, could not endure to see him get free from his clutches. As soon as the blacksmith left the sack a little loose, he sprang out of it and sat upon the blacksmith's neck.

Vakoola felt a cold shudder run through all his frame; his courage gave way, his face grew pale, he knew not what to do; he was already on the point of making the sign of the cross; but the devil bending

his dog's muzzle to his right ear, whispered: "Here I am, I, thy friend; I will do everything for a comrade and a friend such as thou! I'll give thee as much money as thou canst wish for!" squeaked he in his left ear. "No later than this very day Oxana shall be ours!" continued he, turning his muzzle once more to the right ear.

The blacksmith stood considering. "Well," said he, at length, "on this condition I am ready to be thine."

The devil clapped his hand and began to indulge his joy in springing about on the blacksmith's neck. "Now, I've caught him!" thought he to himself, "Now, I'll take my revenge upon thee, my dear fellow, for all thy paintings and all thy tales about devils! What will my fellows say when they come to know that the most pious man in the village is in my power?" and the devil laughed heartily at the thought of how he would tease all the long-tailed breed in hell, and how the lame devil, who was reputed the most cunning of them all for his tricks, would feel provoked.

"Well, Vakoola!" squeaked he, while he continued sitting on Vakoola's neck, as if fearing the blacksmith should escape; "thou knowest well that nothing can be done without contract."

"I am ready," said the blacksmith. "I've heard that it is the custom with you to write it in blood; well, stop, let me take a nail out of my pocket"—and putting his hand behind him, he suddenly seized the devil by his tail.

"Look, what fun!" cried the devil, laughing; "well, let me alone now, there's enough of play!"

"Stop, my dear fellow!" cried the blacksmith, "what wilt thou say now?" and he made the sign of the cross. The devil grew as docile as a lamb. "Stop," continued the blacksmith, drawing him by the tail down to the ground; "I will teach thee how to make good men and upright Christians sin;" and the blacksmith sprang on his back, and once more raised his hand to make the sign of the cross.

"Have mercy upon me, Vakoola!" groaned the devil in a lamentable voice; "I am ready to do whatever thou wilt, only do not make the dread, sign of the cross on me!"

"Ah! that is the strain thou singest now, cursed German that thou art! I know now what to do! Take me a ride on thy back directly, and harkee! a pretty ride must I have!"

"Whither?" gasped the mournful devil.

"To St. Petersburgh, straightway to the Czarina!" and the blacksmith thought he should faint with terror as he felt himself rising up in the air.

Oxana remained a long time pondering over the strange speech of the blacksmith. Something within her told her that she had behaved with too much cruelty towards him. "What if he should indeed resort to some frightful decision? May not such a thing be expected! He may, perhaps, fall in love with some other girl, and, out of spite, proclaim her to be the belle of the village! No, that he would not do, he is too much in love with me! I am so handsome! For none will he ever leave me. He is only joking; he only feigns. Ten minutes will not pass, ere he returns to look at me. I am indeed too harsh towards him. Why not let him have a kiss? just as if it were against my will; that, to a certainty would make him quite delighted!" and the flighty belle began once more to sport with her friends. "Stop," said one of them, "the blacksmith has left his sacks behind; just see what enormous sacks too! His luck has been better than ours; methinks he has got whole quarters of mutton, and sausages, and loaves without number. Plenty indeed; one might feed upon the whole of next fortnight."

"Are these the blacksmith's sacks?" asked Oxana; "let us take them into my cottage just to see what he has got in them." All laughingly agreed to her proposal.

"But we shall never be able to lift them!" cried the girls trying to move the sacks.

"Stay a bit," said Oxana; "come with me to fetch a sledge, and we'll drag them home on it."

The whole party ran to fetch a sledge.

The prisoners were far from pleased at sitting in the sacks, notwithstanding that the clerk had succeeded in poking a great hole with his finger. Had there been nobody near, he would perhaps have found the means of making his escape; but he could not endure the thought of creeping out of the' sack before a whole crowd, and of being laughed at by every one, so he resolved to await the event, giving only now and then a suppressed groan under the impolite boots of Choop. Choop had no less a desire to be set free, feeling that there was something lying under him, which was excessively inconvenient to sit upon. But on hearing his daughter's decision he remained quiet and no longer felt inclined to creep out, considering that he would have certainly some hundred, or perhaps even two hundred steps to walk to get to his dwelling; that upon creeping out, he would have his sheepskin coat to button, his belt to buckle—what a trouble! and last of all, that he had left his cap behind him at Solokha's. So he thought it better to wait till the maidens drew him home on a sledge.

The event, however, proved to be quite contrary to his expectations; at the same time that the maidens ran to bring the sledge, Choop's kinsman left the brandy shop, very cross and dejected. The mistress of the shop would on no account give him credit; he had resolved to wait until some kind-hearted Cossack should step in and offer him a glass of brandy; but, as if purposely, all the Cossacks remained at home, and as became good Christians, ate kootia with their families. Thinking about the corruption of manners, and about the Jewish mistress of the shop having a wooden heart, the kinsman went straight to the sacks and stopped in amazement. "What sacks are these? somebody has left them on the road," said he, looking round. "There must be pork for a certainty in them! Who can it be? who has had the good luck to get so many donations? Were there nothing more than buckwheat cakes and millet-biscuits —why, that would be well enough! But supposing there were only loaves, well, they are welcome too! The Jewess gives a glass of brandy for every loaf. I had better bring them out of the way at once, lest anybody should see them!" and he lifted on his shoulders the sack in which sate Choop and the clerk, but feeling it to be too heavy, "No," said he, "I could not carry it home alone. Now, here comes, as if purposely, the weaver, Shapoovalenko! Good evening, Ostap!"

"Good evening," said the weaver, stopping.

"Where art thou going?"

"I am walking without any purpose, just where my legs carry me."

"Well, my good man, help me to carry off these sacks; some caroller has left them here in the midst of the road. We will divide the booty between us."

"And what is there in the sacks? rolls or loaves?"

"Plenty of everything, I should think." And both hastily snatched sticks out of a palisade, laid one of the sacks upon them, and carried it away on their shoulders.

"Where shall we carry it? to the brandy shop?" asked the weaver, leading the way.

"I thought, too, of carrying it there; but the vile Jewess will not give us credit; she will think we have stolen it somewhere, the more so that I have just left her shop. We had better carry it to my cottage. Nobody will interfere with us; my wife is not at home."

"Art thou sure that she is not at home?" asked the weaver warily.

"Thank Heaven, I am not yet out of my mind," answered the kinsman; "what should I do there if she were at home? I expect she will ramble about all night with the women."

"Who is there!" cried the kinsman's wife, hearing the noise which the two friends made in coming into the passage with the sack.

The kinsman was quite aghast.

"What now?" muttered the weaver, letting his arms drop.

The kinsman's wife was one of those treasures which are often found in this good world of ours. Like her husband, she scarcely ever remained at home, but went all day long fawning among wealthy, gossiping old women; paid them different compliments, ate their donations with great appetite, and beat her husband only in the morning, because it was the only time that she saw him. Their cottage was even older than the trowsers of the village scribe. Many holes in the roof remained uncovered and without thatch; of the palisade round the house, few remnants existed, for no one who was going out, ever took with him a stick to drive away the dogs, but went round by the kinsman's kitchen garden, and got one out of his palisade. Sometimes no fire was lighted in the cottage for three days together. Everything which the affectionate wife succeeded in obtaining from kind people, was hidden by her as far as possible out of the reach of her husband; and if he had got anything which he had not had the time to sell at the brandy shop, she invariably snatched it from him. However meek the kinsman's temper might be, he did not like to yield to her at once; for which reason, he generally left the house with black eyes, and his dear better-half went moaning to tell stories to the old women about the ill conduct of her husband, and the blows she had received at his hands.

Now, it is easy to understand the displeasure of the weaver and the kinsman at her sudden appearance. Putting the sack on the ground, they took up a position of defence in front of it, and covered it with the wide skirts of their coats; but it was already too late. The kinsman's wife, although her old eyes had grown dim, saw the sack at once. "That's good," she said, with the countenance of a hawk at the sight of its prey! "that's good of you to have collected so much; That's the way good people always behave! But it cannot be! I think you must have stolen it somewhere; show me directly what you have got there! —show me the sack directly! Do you hear me?"

"May the bald devil show it to thee! we will not," answered the kinsman, assuming an air of dogged resolution.

"Why should we?" said the weaver—"the sack is ours, not thine."

"Thou shalt show it to me, thou good-for-nothing drunkard," said she, giving the tall kinsman a blow under his chin, and pushing her way to the sack. The kinsman and the weaver, however, stood her attack courageously, and drove her back; but had hardly time to recover themselves, when the woman darted once more into the passage, this time with a poker in her hand. In no time she gave a cut over her husband's fingers, another on the weaver's hand, and stood beside the sack.

"Why did we let her go?" said the weaver, coming to his senses.

"Why did we indeed? and why didst thou?" said the kinsman.

"Your poker seems to be an iron one!" said the weaver, after keeping silent for a while, and scratching his back. "My wife bought one at the fair last year; well, hers is not to be compared—does not hurt at all."

The triumphant dame, in the meanwhile, set her candle on the floor, opened the sack, and looked into it.

But her old eyes, which had so quickly caught sight of the sack, for this time deceived her. "Why, here lies a whole boar!" cried she, clapping her hands with delight.

"A boar, a whole boar! dost hear?" said the weaver, giving the kinsman a push. "And thou alone art to blame?"

"What's to be done?" muttered the kinsman, shrugging his shoulders.

"How, what? why are we standing here quietly? we must have the sack back again! Come!"

"Away, away with thee! it is our boar!" cried the weaver, advancing.

"Away, away with thee, she devil! it is not thy property," said the kinsman.

The old hag once more took up the poker, but at the same moment Choop stepped out of the sack, and stood in the middle of the passage stretching his limbs like a man just awake from a long sleep.

The kinsman's wife shrieked in terror, while the others opened their mouths in amazement.

"What did she say, then, the old fool—that it was a boar?"

"It's not a boar!" said the kinsman, straining his eyes.

"Just see, what a man some one has thrown into the sack," said the weaver, stepping back in a fright. "They may say what they will—the evil spirit must have lent his hand to the work; the man could never have gone through a window."

"'Tis my kinsman," cried the kinsman, after having looked at Choop.

"And who else should it be, then?" said Choop, laughing. "Was it not a capital trick of mine? And you thought of eating me like pork? Well, I'll give you good news: there is something lying at the bottom of the sack; if it be not a boar, it must be a sucking-pig, or something of the sort. All the time there was something moving under me."

The weaver and the kinsman rushed to the sack, the wife caught hold of it on the other side, and the fight would have been renewed, had not the clerk, who saw no escape left, crept out of the sack.

The kinsman's wife, quite stupified, let go the clerk's leg, which she had taken hold of, in order to drag him out of the sack.

"There's another one!" cried the weaver with terror; "the devil knows what happens now in the world—it's enough to send one mad. No more sausages or loaves—men are thrown into the sacks."

"'Tis the devil!" muttered Choop, more astonished than any one. "Well now, Solokha!— and to put the clerk in a sack too! That is why I saw her room all full of sacks. Now, I have it: she has got two men in each of them; and I thought that I was the only one. Well now, Solokha!"

The maidens were somewhat astonished at finding only one sack left. "There is nothing to be done; we must content ourselves with this one," said Oxana. They all went at once to the sack, and succeeded in lifting it upon the sledge. The elder resolved to keep quiet, considering that if he cried out, and asked them to undo the sack, and let him out, the stupid girls would run away, fearing they had got the devil in the sack, and he would be left in the street till the next morning. Meanwhile, the maidens, with one accord, taking one another by the hand, flew like the wind with the sledge over the crisp snow. Many of them, for fun, sat down upon the sledge; some went right upon the elder's head. But he was determined to bear everything. At last they reached Oxana's house, opened the doors of the passage and of the room, and with shouts of laughter brought in the sack. "Let us see what we have got here," cried they, and hastily began to undo the sack. At this juncture, the hiccups of the elder (which had not ceased for a moment all the time he had been sitting in the sack), increased to such a degree that he could not refrain from giving vent to them in the loudest key. "Ah! there is somebody in the sack!" shrieked the maidens, and they darted in a fright towards the door.

"What does this mean?" said Choop, stepping in. "Where are you rushing, like mad things?"

"Ah! father," answered Oxana, "there is somebody sitting in the sack!"

"In what sack? Where did you get this sack from?"

"The blacksmith threw it down in the middle of the road," was the answer.

"I thought as much!" muttered Choop. "Well, what are you afraid of, then? Let us see. Well, my good man (excuse me for not calling thee by thy Christian and surname), please to make thy way out of the sack."

The elder came out.

"Lord have mercy upon us!" cried the maidens.

"The elder was in, too!" thought Choop to himself, looking at him from head to foot, as if not trusting his eyes. "There now! Eh!" and he could say no more. The elder felt no less confused, and he knew not what to say. "It seems to be rather cold out of doors?" asked he, turning to Choop.

"Yes! the frost is rather severe," answered Choop. "Do tell me, what dost thou use to black thy boots with: tallow or tar?"[20] He did not at all wish to put this question; he intended to ask—How didst thou come to be in this sack? but he knew not himself how it was that his tongue asked quite another question.

"I prefer tar," answered the elder. "Well, good-bye, Choop," said he, and putting his cap on, he stepped out of the room.

"What a fool I was to ask him what he uses to black his boots with," muttered Choop, looking at the door out of which the elder had just gone.

"Well, Solokha! To put such a man into a sack! May the devil take her; and I, fool that I was—but where is that infernal sack?"

"I threw it into the corner," said Oxana, "there is nothing more in it."

"I know these tricks well! Nothing in it, indeed! Give it me directly; there must be one more! Shake it well. Is there nobody? Abominable woman! And yet to look at her one would think she must be a saint, that she never had a sin"—

But let us leave Choop giving vent to his anger, and return to the blacksmith; the more so as time is running away, and by the clock it must be near nine.

At first, Vakoola could not help feeling afraid at rising to such a height, that he could distinguish nothing upon the earth, and at coming so near the moon, that if he had not bent down, he would certainly have touched it with his cap. Yet, after a time, he recovered his presence of mind, and began to laugh at the devil. All was bright in the sky. A light silvery mist covered the transparent air. Everything was distinctly visible; and the blacksmith even noticed how a wizard flew past him, sitting in a pot; how some stars, gathered in a group, played at blind man's buff; how a whole swarm of spirits were whirling about in the distance; how a devil who danced in the moonbeam, seeing him riding, took off his cap and made him a bow; how there was a besom flying, on which, apparently, a witch had just taken a ride. They met many other things; and all, on seeing the blacksmith, stopped for a moment to look at him, and then continued their flight far away. The blacksmith went on flying, and suddenly he saw Petersburgh all in a blaze. (There must have been an illumination that day.) Flying past the town gate, the devil changed into a horse, and the blacksmith saw himself riding a high stepping steed, in the middle of the street. "Good Heavens! What a noise, what a clatter, what a blaze!" On either side rose houses, several stories high; from every quarter the clatter of horses' hoofs, and of wheels, arose like thunder; at every step arose tall houses, as if starting from beneath the ground; bridges quivered under flying carriages; the coachmen shouted; the snow crisped under thousands of sledges rushing in every direction; pedestrians kept the wall of the houses along the footpath, all studded with flaring pots of fire, and their gigantic shadows danced upon the walls, losing themselves amongst the chimneys and on the roofs. The blacksmith looked with amazement on every side. It seamed to him as if all the houses looked at him with their innumerable fire-eyes. He saw such a number of gentlemen wearing fur cloaks

covered with cloth, that he no longer knew to which of them he ought to take off his cap. "Gracious Lord! What a number of nobility one sees here!" thought the blacksmith; "I suppose every one here, who goes in a fur cloak, can be no less than a magistrate! and as for the persons who sit in those wonderful carts with glasses, they must be, if not the chiefs of the town, certainly commissaries, and, may be, of a still higher rank!"

Here, the devil put an end to his reflections, by asking if he was to bring him right before the Czarina? "No, I should be too afraid to go at once," answered the blacksmith; "but I know there must be some Zaporoghians here, who passed through Dikanka last autumn on their way to Petersburgh. They were going on business to the Czarina. Let us have their advice. Now, devil, get into my pocket, and bring me to those Zaporoghians." In less than a minute, the devil grew so thin and so small, that he had no trouble in getting into the pocket, and in the twinkling of an eye, Vakoola, (himself, he knew not how) ascended a staircase, opened a door and fell a little back, struck by the rich furniture of a spacious room. Yet, he felt a little more at ease, when he recognised the same Zaporoghians, who had passed through Dikanka. They were sitting upon silk covered sofas, with their tar besmeared boots tucked under them, and were smoking the strongest tobacco fibres.

"Good evening, God help you, your worships!" said the blacksmith coming nearer, and he made a low bow, almost touching the ground with his forehead.

"Who is that?" asked a Zaporoghian, who sat near Vakoola, of another who was sitting farther off.

"Do you not recognise me at once?" said Vakoola; "I am the blacksmith, Vakoola! Last autumn, as you passed through Dikanka, you remained nearly two days at my cottage. God grant you good health, and many happy years! It was I who put a new iron tire round one of the fore wheels of your vehicle."

"Ah!" said the same Zaporoghian, "it is the blacksmith who paints so well. Good evening, countryman, what didst thou come for?"

"Only just to look about. They say"—

"Well, my good fellow," said the Zaporoghian, assuming a grand air, and trying to speak with the high Russian accent, "what dost thou think of the town! Is it large?"

The blacksmith was no less desirous to show that he also understood good manners. We have already seen that he knew something of fashionable language. "The site is quite considerable," answered he very composedly. "The houses are enormously big, the paintings they are adorned with, are thoroughly important. Some of the houses are to an extremity ornamented with gold letters. No one can say a word to the contrary: the proportion is marvellous!" The Zaporoghians, hearing the blacksmith so familiar with fine language, drew a conclusion very much to his advantage.

"We will have a chat with thee presently, my dear fellow. Now, we must go at once to the Czarina."

"To the Czarina? Be kind, your worships, take me with you!"

"Take thee with us?" said the Zaporoghian, with an expression such as a tutor would assume towards a boy four years old, who begs to ride on a real, live, great horse.

"What hast thou to do there? No, it cannot be," and his features took an important look. "My dear fellow, we have to speak to the Czarina on business."

"Do take me," urged the blacksmith. "Beg!" whispered he to the devil, striking his pocket with his fist. Scarcely had he done so, when another Zaporoghian said, "Well, come, comrades, we will take him."

"Well, then, let him come!" said the others. "Put on such a dress as ours, then."

The blacksmith hastily donned a green dress, when the door opened, and a man, in a coat all

ornamented with silver braid, came in and said it was time to start.

Once more was the blacksmith overwhelmed with astonishment, as he rolled along in an enormous carriage, hung on springs, lofty houses seeming to run away on both sides of him, and the pavement to roll of its own accord under the feet of the horses.

"Gracious Lord! what a glare," thought the blacksmith to himself. "We have no such light at Dikanka, even during the day." The Zaporoghians entered, stepped into a magnificent hall, and went up a brilliantly lighted staircase. "What a staircase!" thought the blacksmith; "it is a pity to walk upon it. What ornaments! And they say that fairy-tales are so many lies; they are plain truth! My heavens! what a balustrade! what workmanship! The iron alone must have cost not less than some fifty roubles!"

Having ascended the staircase, the Zaporoghians passed through the first hall. Warily did the blacksmith follow them, fearing at every step to slip on the waxed floor. They passed three more saloons, and the blacksmith had not yet recovered from his astonishment. Coming into a fourth, he could not refrain from stopping before a picture which hung on the wall. It represented the Holy Virgin, with the Infant Jesus in her arms. "What a picture! what beautiful painting!" thought he. "She seems to speak, she seems to be alive! And the Holy Infant! there, he stretches out his little hands! there, it laughs, the poor babe! And what colours! Good heavens! what colours! I should think there was no ochre used in the painting, certainly nothing but ultramarine and lake! And what a brilliant blue! Capital workmanship! The back-ground must have been done with white lead! And yet," he continued, stepping to the door and taking the handle in his hand, "however beautiful these paintings may be, this brass handle is still more worthy of admiration; what neat work! I should think all this must have been made by German blacksmiths at the most exorbitant prices." ... The blacksmith might have gone on for a long time with his reflections, had not the attendant in the braid-covered dress given him a push, telling him not to remain behind the others. The Zaporoghians passed two rooms more, and stopped. Some generals, in gold-embroidered uniforms, were waiting there. The Zaporoghians bowed in every direction, and stood in a group. A minute afterwards there entered, attended by a numerous suite, a man of majestic stature, rather stout, dressed in the hetman's uniform and yellow boots. His hair was uncombed; one of his eyes had a small cataract on it; his face wore an expression of stately pride; his every movement gave proof that he was accustomed to command. All the generals, who before his arrival were strutting about somewhat haughtily in their gold-embroidered uniforms, came bustling towards him with profound bows, seeming to watch every one of his words, nay, of his movements, that they might run and see his desires fulfilled. The hetman did not pay any attention to all this, scarcely nodding his head, and went straight to the Zaporoghians.

They bowed to him with one accord till their brows touched the ground.

"Are all of you here?" asked he, in a somewhat drawling voice, with a slight nasal twang.

"Yes, father, every one of us is here," answered the Zaporoghians, bowing once more.

"Remember to speak just as I taught you."

"We will, father, we will!"

"Is it the Czar?" asked the blacksmith of one of the Zaporoghians.

"The Czar! a great deal more; it is Potemkin himself!" was the answer.

Voices were heard in the adjoining room, and the blacksmith knew not where to turn his eyes, when he saw a multitude of ladies enter, dressed in silk gowns with long trains, and courtiers in gold-embroidered coats and bag wigs. He was dazzled with the glitter of gold, silver, and precious stones. The Zaporoghians fell with one accord on their knees, and cried with one voice, "Mother, have mercy upon us!" The blacksmith, too, followed their example, and stretched himself full length on the floor.

"Rise up!" was heard above their heads, in a commanding yet soft voice. Some of the courtiers officiously hastened to push the Zaporoghians.

"We will not arise, mother; we will die rather than arise!" cried the Zaporoghians.

Potemkin bit his lips. At last he came himself, and whispered imperatively to one of them. They arose. Then only did the blacksmith venture to raise his eyes, and saw before him a lady, not tall, somewhat stout, with powdered hair, blue eyes, and that majestic, smiling air, which conquered every one, and could be the attribute only of a reigning woman.

"His Highness[21] promised to make me acquainted to-day with a people under my dominion, whom I have not yet seen," said the blue-eyed lady, looking with curiosity at the Zaporoghians. "Are you satisfied with the manner in which you are provided for here?" asked she, coming nearer.

"Thank thee, mother! Provisions are good, though mutton is not quite so fine here as at home; but why should one be so very particular about it?"

Potemkin frowned at hearing them speak in quite a different manner to what he had told them to do.

One of the Zaporoghians stepped out from the group, and, in a dignified manner, began the following speech:—"Mother, have mercy upon us! What have we, thy faithful people, done to deserve thine anger? Have we ever given assistance to the miscreant Tartars? Did we ever help the Turks in anything? Have we betrayed thee in our acts, nay, even in our thoughts? Wherefore, then, art thou ungracious towards us? At first they told us thou hadst ordered fortresses to be raised against us; then we were told thou wouldst make regular regiments of us; now, we hear of new evils coming on us. In what were the Zaporoghians ever in fault with regard to thee? Was it in bringing thy army across Perekop? or in helping thy generals to get the better of the Crimean Tartars?"

Potemkin remained silent, and, with an unconcerned air, was brushing the diamonds which sparkled on his fingers.

"What do you ask for, then?" demanded Catherine, in a solicitous tone of voice.

The Zaporoghians looked knowingly at one another.

"Now's the time! the Czarina asks what we want!" thought the blacksmith, and suddenly down he went on his knees. "Imperial Majesty! Do not show me thy anger, show me thy mercy! Let me know (and let not my question bring the wrath of thy Majesty's worship upon me!) of what stuff are made the boots that thou wearest on thy feet? I think there is no bootmaker in any country in the world who ever will be able to make such pretty ones. Gracious Lord! if ever my wife had such boots to wear!"

The empress laughed; the courtiers laughed too. Potemkin frowned and smiled at the same time. The Zaporoghians pushed the blacksmith, thinking he had gone mad.

"Stand up!" said the empress, kindly. "If thou wishest to have such shoes, thy wish may be easily fulfilled. Let him have directly my richest gold embroidered shoes. This artlessness pleases me exceedingly." Then, turning towards a gentleman with a round pale face, who stood a little apart from the rest, and whose plain dress, with mother-of-pearl buttons, showed at once that he was not a courtier[22]: "There you have," continued she, "a subject worthy of your witty pen."

"Your Imperial Majesty is too gracious! It would require a pen no less able than that of a Lafontaine!" answered with a bow, the gentleman in the plain dress.

"Upon my honour! I tell you I am still under the impression of your 'Brigadier.'[1] You read exceedingly well!" Then, speaking once more to the Zaporoghians, she said, "I was told that you never married at your Ssiecha?"

"How could that be, mother? Thou knowest well, by thyself, that no man could ever do without a woman," answered the same Zaporoghian who had conversed with the blacksmith; and the blacksmith was astonished to hear one so well acquainted with polished language speak to the Czarina, as if on purpose, in the coarsest accent used among peasants.

"A cunning people," thought he to himself; "he does it certainly for some reason."

"We are no monks," continued the speaker, "we are sinful men. Every one of us is as much inclined to forbidden fruit as a good Christian can be. There are not a few among us who have wives, only their wives do not live in the Ssiecha. Many have their wives in Poland; others have wives in Ukraine; [23] there are some, too, who have wives in Turkey."

At this moment the shoes were brought to the blacksmith.

"Gracious Lord! what ornaments!" cried he, overpowered with joy, grasping the shoes. "Imperial Majesty! if thou dost wear such shoes upon thy feet (and thy Honour, I dare say, does use them even for walking in the snow and the mud), what, then, must thy feet be like?—whiter than sugar, at the least, I should think!"

The empress, who really had charming feet of an exquisite shape, could not refrain from smiling at such a compliment from a simple-minded blacksmith, who, notwithstanding his sunburnt features must have been accounted a handsome lad in his Zaporoghian dress.

The blacksmith, encouraged by the condescension of the Czarina, was already on the point of asking her some questions about all sorts of things, whether it was true that sovereigns fed upon nothing but honey and lard, and so on; but feeling the Zaporoghians pull the skirts of his coat, he resolved to keep silent; and when the empress turned to the older Cossacks, and began to ask them about their way of living, and their manners in the Ssiecha, he stepped a little back, bent his head towards his pocket, and said in a low voice: "Quick, carry me hence, away!" and in no time he had left the town gate far behind.

"He is drowned! I'll swear to it, he's drowned! May I never leave this spot alive, if he is not drowned!" said the fat weaver's wife, standing in the middle of the street, amidst a group of the villagers' wives.

"Then I am a liar? Did I ever steal anything? Did I ever cast an evil-eye upon any one? that I am no longer worthy of belief?" shrieked a hag wearing a Cossack's dress, and with a violet-coloured nose, brandishing her hands in the most violent manner: "May I never have another drink of water if old Pereperchenko's wife did not see with her own eyes, how that the blacksmith has hanged himself!"

"The blacksmith hanged himself? what is this I hear?" said the elder, stepping out of Choop's cottage; and he pushed his way nearer to the talking women.

"Say rather, mayest thou never wish to drink brandy again, old drunkard!" answered the weaver's wife. "One must be as mad as thou art to hang one's self. He is drowned! drowned in the ice hole! This I know as well as that thou just now didst come from the brandy-shop!"

"Shameless creature! what meanest thou to reproach me with?" angrily retorted the hag with the violet-coloured nose, "thou hadst better hold thy tongue, good-for-nothing woman! Don't I know that the clerk comes every evening to thee?"

The weaver's wife became red in the face. "What does the clerk do? to whom does the clerk come? What lie art thou telling?"

"The clerk?" cried, in shrill voice, the clerk's wife, who, dressed in a hare-skin cloak covered with blue nankeen, pushed her way towards the quarrelling ones; "I will let you know about the clerk! Who is talking here about the clerk?

"There is she to whom the clerk pays his visits!" said the violet-nosed woman, pointing to the weaver's

wife.

"So, thou art the witch," continued the clerk's wife stepping nearer the weaver's wife; "thou art the witch who sends him out of his senses and gives him a charmed beverage in order to bewitch him?"

"Wilt thou leave me alone, she-devil!" cried the weaver's wife, drawing back.

"Cursed witch! Mayest thou never see thy children again, good-for-nothing woman!" and the clerk's wife spat right into the eyes of the weaver's wife.

The weaver's wife wished to return her the same compliment, but instead of that, spat on the unshaven beard of the elder, who had come near the squabblers in order to hear what was going on. "Ah! nasty creature!" cried the elder, wiping his face with his skirt, and lifting his whip. This motion made them all fly in different directions, scolding the whole time. "The abominable creature" continued the elder, still wiping his beard. "So the blacksmith is drowned! Gracious Heaven! and such a capital painter! and what strong knives, and sickles, and ploughshares he used to forge! How strong he was himself!"

"Yes," continued he, meditatively, "there are few such men in our village! That was the reason of the poor fellow's ill-temper, which I noticed while I was sitting in that confounded sack! So much for the blacksmith! He was here, and now nothing is left of him! And I was thinking of letting him shoe my speckled mare,".... and, full of such Christian thoughts, the elder slowly went to his cottage.

Oxana was very downcast at hearing the news; she did not put any faith in the evidence of Pereperchenko's wife, or in the gossiping of the women. She knew the blacksmith to be too pious to venture on letting his soul perish. But what if indeed he had left the village with the resolve never to return? And scarcely could there be found anywhere such an accomplished lad as the blacksmith. And he loved her so intensely! He had endured her caprices longer than any one else. All the night long, the belle turned beneath her coverlet, from right to left, and from left to right, and could not go to sleep. Now she scolded herself almost aloud, throwing herself into the most bewitching attitudes, which the darkness of the night hid even from herself; then, in silence, she resolved to think no more of anything, and still continued thinking, and was burning with fever; and in the morning she was quite in love with the blacksmith.

Choop was neither grieved nor rejoiced at the fate of Vakoola; all his ideas had concentrated themselves into one: he could not for a moment forget Solokha's want of faith; and even when asleep, ceased not to abuse her.

The morning came; the church was crowded even before daylight. The elderly women, in their white linen veils, their flowing robes, and long jackets made of white cloth, piously made the sign of the cross, standing close to the entrance of the church. The Cossacks' wives, in green and yellow bodices, and some of them even in blue dresses, with gold braidings behind, stood a little before them. The girls endeavoured to get still nearer to the altar, and displayed whole shopfuls of ribbons on their heads, and of necklaces, little crosses, and silver coins on their necks. But right in front stood the Cossacks and the peasants, with their mustachios, their crown-tufts, their thick necks and their freshly-shaven chins, dressed for the most part in cloaks with hoods, from beneath which were seen white, and sometimes blue coats. On every face, wherever one looked, one might see it was a holiday. The elder already licked his lips at the idea of breaking his fast with a sausage. The girls were thinking about the pleasure of running about with the lads, and skating upon the ice. The old women muttered their prayers more zealously than ever. The whole church resounded with the thumps which the Cossack Sverbygooze gave with his forehead against the ground.

Oxana alone was out of sorts. She said her prayers, and yet could not pray. Her heart was besieged by so many different feelings, one more mournful than the other, one more perplexing than the other, that the greatest dejection appeared upon her features, and tears moistened her eyes. None of the girls could

understand the reason of her state, and none would have suspected its being occasioned by the blacksmith. And yet Oxana was not the only one who noticed his absence; the whole congregation remarked that there lacked something to the fulness of the festival. Moreover, the clerk, during his journey in the sack, had got a bad cold, and his cracked voice was hardly audible. The newly arrived chanter had a deep bass indeed. But at all events, it would have been much better if the blacksmith had been there, as he had so fine a voice, and knew how to chant the tunes which were used at Poltava; and besides, he was churchwarden.

The matins were said. The liturgy had also been brought to a close. Well, what had indeed happened to the blacksmith?

The devil, with the blacksmith on his back, had flown with still greater speed during the remainder of the night. Vakoola soon reached his cottage. At the very moment he heard the crow of a cock. "Whither away?" cried he, seeing the devil in the act of sneaking off; and he caught him by his tail. "Wait a bit my dear fellow; I have not done with thee; thou must get thy reward!" and, taking a stick, he gave him three blows across his back, so that the poor devil took to his heels, exactly as a peasant might do who had just been punished by a police officer. So, the enemy of mankind, instead of cheating, seducing, or leading anybody into foolishness, was made a fool of himself. After this, Vakoola went into the passage, buried himself in the hay, and slept till noon.

When he awoke, he was alarmed at seeing the sun high in the heavens: "I have missed matins and liturgy!" and the pious blacksmith fell into mournful thoughts, and decided that the sleep which had prevented him from going to church on such a festival was certainly a punishment inflicted by God for his sinful intention of killing himself. But he soon quieted his mind by resolving to confess no later than next week, and from that very day to make fifty genuflexions during his prayers for a whole year. Then he went into the room, but nobody was there; Solokha had not yet returned home. He cautiously drew the shoes from his breast pocket, and once more admired their beautiful workmanship, and marvelled at the events of the preceding night. Then he washed, and dressed himself as fine as he could, putting on the same suit of clothes which he had got from the Zaporoghians, took out of his box a new cap with a blue crown and a trimming of black sheepskin, which had never been worn since he bought it at Poltava; he took out also a new belt, of divers brilliant colours; wrapped up these with a scourge, in a handkerchief, and went straight to Choop's cottage.

Choop opened wide his eyes as he saw the blacksmith enter his room. He knew not at what most to marvel, whether at the blacksmith being once more alive, or at his having ventured to come into his house, or at his being dressed so finely, like a Zaporoghian; but he was still more astonished when he saw Vakoola undo his handkerchief, and set before him an entirely new cap, and such a belt as had never before been seen in the village; and when Vakoola fell at his knees, saying in a deprecating voice: "Father, have mercy on me! do not be angry with me! There, take this scourge, whip me as much as thou wilt! I give myself up. I acknowledge all my trespasses. Whip me, but put away thine anger! The more so that thou and my late father were like two brothers, and shared bread, and salt, and brandy together."

Choop could not help feeling inwardly pleased at seeing at his feet the blacksmith, the very same blacksmith who would not concede a step to any one in the village, and who bent copper coins between his fingers, as if they were so many buckwheat fritters. To make himself still more important, Choop took the scourge, gave three strokes with it upon the blacksmith's back, and then said: "Well, that will do! Stand up! Attend to men older than thyself. I forget all that has taken place between us. Now, speak out, what dost thou want?"

"Father, let me have Oxana!"

Choop remained thinking for a while; he looked at the cap—he looked at the belt; the cap was beautiful

—the belt not less so; he remembered the bad faith of Solokha, and said, in a resolute voice, "Well, send me thy marriage brokers."

"Ah!" shrieked Oxana, stepping across the threshold; and she stared at him, with a look of joy and astonishment.

"Look at the boots I have brought thee!" said Vakoola; "they are the very boots which the Czarina wears."

"No, no, I do not want the boots!" said Oxana, and she waved her hands, never taking her eyes off him; "it will do without the boots." She could speak no more, and her face turned all crimson.

The blacksmith came nearer, and took her hand. The belle cast down her eyes. Never yet had she been so marvellously handsome; the exulting blacksmith gently stole a kiss, and her face flushed still redder, and she looked still prettier.

As the late archbishop happened to pass on a journey through Dikanka, he greatly commended the spot on which that village stands, and driving down the street, stopped his carriage before a new cottage. "Whose cottage is this, so highly painted?" asked his Eminence of a handsome woman who was standing before the gate, with an infant in her arms.

"It is the blacksmith Vakoola's cottage!" answered Oxana, for she it was, making him a deep curtesy.

"Very good painting, indeed! Capital painting!" said the Right Eminent, looking at the door and the windows. And, in truth, every window was surrounded by a stripe of red paint; and the door was painted all over with Cossacks on horseback, with pipes in their mouths. But the archbishop bestowed still more praises on Vakoola, when he was made acquainted with the blacksmith's having performed public penance, and with his having painted, at his own expense, the whole of the church choir, green, with red flowers running over it. But Vakoola had done still more: he had painted the devil in hell, upon the wall which is to your left when you step into the church. This devil had such an odious face that no one could refrain from spitting, as they passed by. The women, as soon as their children began to cry, brought them to this picture and said, "Look! is he not an odious creature?" and the children stopped their tears, looked sideways at the picture, and clung more closely to their mother's bosom.

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[1]Chief town of a district in the government of Poltava.

[2]Every foreigner, whatever may be his station, is called a German by Russian peasants. A dress coat is often sufficient to procure this name for its wearer.

[3]A village in the government of Poltava, in which the author places the scene of most of his stories.

[4]The free burghers of Little Russia, even to this day, pride themselves on being called Cossacks.

[5]Almost every family name in Little Russia has some meaning; the name of Choop means the tuft of hair growing on the crown of the head, which is alone left to grow by the Little Russians; they uniformly shave the occiput and temples; in Great or Middle Russia, peasants, on the contrary, let the hair grow on these parts, and shave or cut it away from the crown.

[6]Kootia is a dish of boiled rice and plums, eaten by Russians on Christmas Eve.

[7]Varenookha is corn brandy boiled with fruit and spice.

[8]A rank in irregular troops, corresponding to that of captain in the army.

[9]Borsch is a soup made of meat, sausages, and thin slices of beet-root and cabbage steeped in vinegar.

[10]Chief town of a district in the government of Poltava.

[11]Long coats made of sheepskins, with the fur worn inside. They are used in Russia by common people.

[12]The ovens of the peasants' cottages are built in the shape of furnaces, with a place on the top which is reserved for sleeping.

[13]About eightpence a yard.

[14]Little Russians shave beard and whiskers, leaving only their mustachios.

[15]Chief town of a district in the government of Chernigoff.

[16]A carriage something between a dog-cart and a tilbury.

[17]This, according to the laws of the Greek Church, would prevent their children from intermarrying.

[18]Village clerks in Russia had their hair plaited; a practice which still continues in some remote provinces. Many priests, not allowed by the custom of the land to cut their hair short, wear it, for convenience' sake, plaited when at home and only loosen it during the performance of the duties of their office.

[19]Russians are much more strict in their fasts than Papists, eating no milk or eggs. Some even go so far as to eat no fish and no hot dishes, restricting their food to cold boiled vegetables and bread. The author has here very happily seized a trait of the inconsistency of a Little Russian peasant's character—swallowing a camel in asking for communication with the devil, and straining at a gnat in the shape of a curd dumpling in fast-time.

[20]This touch very characteristically exemplifies the cunning naïveté of the Little Russians, who, when deeply interested in anything, will never come to the point at once.

[21]Potemkin was created by Catherine II. Prince of Tauride, with the title of Highness, an honour rarely bestowed in Russia, and which he had fully deserved by his exertions in rendering Russian the provinces which, only a few years before, were under the dominion of the Crimean Tartars. All South, or New Russia, offers at every step records of the administrative genius of Potemkin, who, if at the outset of his career he was indebted for the favours of his sovereign to his personal appearance (which was remarkably handsome, notwithstanding a cataract in one eye), succeeded in justifying those favours by his talents, which give him an undoubted right to rank amongst the greatest statesmen of Catherine's reign—a reign which abounded in great statesmen.

[22]The author alluded to is Von Wiessen, who, in his writings (particularly in two comedies, the "Brigadier," and the "Young Nobleman without Employment,") ridiculed the then prevailing fashion amongst the Russian nobility of despising national and blindly following foreign (particularly French) customs.

[23]Ukraine, i.e., the Borders, an appellation which was of of yore given to the country now called Little Russia, which formed, in fact, the border between the territories of the Czar of Muscovy and those of Poland, the Sclavonic provinces under the dominion of Austria, of the Sultan of Turkey, of the Khans of the Tartars of the Crimea and of the Golden Horde (residing along the Volga). The name of Ukraine is, down to this time given to Little Russia by its natives, they considering it derogatory to acknowledge their country to be smaller than Great (Middle) Russia.

TARASS BOOLBA:

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

NICHOLAS GOGOL.

I.

"Well, son, turn round! let me see thy back! What a queer figure thou art! What priest's cassocks have you got on? And do all of you at the College dress like that?" These were the words with which old Boolba greeted his two sons, who, after completing their education at Kieff, had just returned to their father's house.

His sons had just dismounted from their horses. They were two strong lads, who still looked from beneath their brows as young collegians are apt to do. Their manly healthy features were covered with the first down of hair, unacquainted as yet with the razor. Such a greeting on the part of the father, put them to great confusion, and they stood motionless, with their eyes bent down on the ground.

"Stay, stay a bit; give me leisure to look at you," he went on, turning them round; "what long coats! what coats, indeed! Never in the world were such coats! Here, let one of you just try to run! We shall soon see if he does not fall, and get his legs entangled in his skirts."

"Don't laugh at us, father, don't laugh," said at last the elder son.

"Look at the haughty fellow! and why should I not laugh?"

"For this reason: that though thou art my father, if thou goest on laughing, by Heavens, I'll give thee a thrashing."

"Ah, wretch of a son! thrash thy father!" exclaimed Tarass Boolba, falling back a few steps in astonishment.

"It matters not that thou art my father. I pay regard to nobody, and will permit nobody to insult me."

"And how are we to fight? with our fists?"

"In whatever manner it may chance."

"Well, with fists be it!" said Tarass Boolba, tucking up his sleeves; "I will see what kind of a man thou art at fisticuffs!" And father and son, instead of embracing after a long separation, began to give one another blows on the ribs, on the loins, and on the chest, now falling back and taking aim, and now stepping forward again.

"Only see, good people! the old man has gone mad! he has decidedly lost his senses!" Thus spoke the good mother, a thin, pale-faced woman, who stood at the threshold, and had not even had time to embrace her cherished sons.

"The children are but just come home; for more than a year we have not seen them, and what has he got into his head that he should fight with them?"

"He fights pretty well," said Boolba, stopping. "Very well, indeed!" continued he, taking breath; "so that I'd better not have tried it. A good Cossack will he make! Well, son! good day! let me embrace thee!" And father and son began kissing one another. "Well, my son, as thou didst strike me, so strike every one—give quarter to none! And nevertheless, thy dress is very funny! What cord is that hanging

about thy loins? And thou, sluggard!" said he, turning to his younger son, "why dost thou remain there with thy hands hanging idle? why, son of a dog that thou art, why dost thou not give me a beating?"

"What hast thou hit upon now!" said the mother, embracing her younger son; "how couldst thou get into thy brain that a son should beat his father? And is this the proper time, too? The child is yet young; he has undergone such a long journey, and is quite tired" (the child was twenty years old, and seven feet high); "he ought to take a meal and some rest; and thou wishest to make him fight!"

"Ah, I have it! thou art a pet!" said Boolba; "do not, my son, give heed to what thy mother is saying; she is but a woman, and what can she know? As for thy coddling—the open field and a swift horse—these must be thy coddling! And look at this sabre—this is to be thy mother! It is all nonsense that they have been putting into your heads at the college: books, grammars, and philosophy, yes, the whole lot of them—I spit upon them all." Here Boolba used words such as are not to be met with in books. "I had better send you, not later than next week, to the Zaporoghian Ssiecha. There you will have something to learn! that will be a good school for you; there you will get brains!"

"And are they not to remain at home more than a week?" mournfully asked the old mother, with tears in her eyes. "Poor souls, they will have no time even to rest a little, no time to get acquainted with their father's roof; and I shall not have time to have a good look at them!"

"Have done, old woman! no howling! A Cossack is not made to spend his life with women. Hadst thou the power, thou wouldst put both of them under thy petticoat, and sit upon them as a hen does upon her eggs. Go, go, and have everything in the house put upon the table. We do not want pastry, honey-cakes, poppyseed cakes, and all those sweet nonsenses. Bring us a whole roasted sheep, give us a buck, let us have some mead[1] that is twenty years old, and above all things, plenty of brandy; and let it not be the brandy with raisins and various spices, but plain, clean, corn brandy, that hisses and simmers."

Boolba conducted his sons into the parlour, from which hastily rushed two pretty maid servants, with red necklaces, who were putting the rooms in order. They might have been scared by the arrival of the young masters, who never let any woman pass by quietly; or, perhaps, they did it only in accordance with the custom of all women, which is to shriek aloud, and run away with the utmost speed at the sight of a man; and then afterwards stand and gaze at him, covering their faces with their sleeves, as if vastly ashamed. The great room was arranged according to the taste of those times, of which there are nowhere such vivid pictures to be found as in songs and popular legends;—these, too, are no longer, as of yore, sung in Ukraine by blind, long-bearded old men, who used to sing them in the hearing of assembled crowds, and with the accompaniment of the soft music of the bandora[2]

The furniture was also in the taste of those warlike, sturdy times, when the Union[3] began to provoke struggles and battles in Ukraine. The walls were all neatly plastered with coloured clay. Upon them hung sabres, scourges, nets for catching birds and for fishing, guns, a powder-horn of exquisite workmanship, a golden snaffle-bit, and horse-shackles with silver plates. The windows were small, with dim, round panes, such as are now found only in old churches, and through which one could only see by lifting the moveable glass. The windows and doors were surrounded with stripes of red paint. In the corners there stood, upon shelves, an array of jugs, bottles, and flagons of green and blue glass, chased silver cups, and gilded dram-cups of Venetian, Turkish, and Circassian workmanship. They had come into Boolba's hands by various means, he being the third or fourth possessor of them, an occurrence very usual in those warlike days. Wooden benches ran all round the room; an immense table stood in the front corner, under the holy images; a large stove, which had many projecting and receding corners, was covered with variegated, varnished tiles. All this was familiar to our two youths, who had every year come home for the vacations. They had always until now come home on foot, because they had no horses, for collegians are not permitted to ride on horseback. The long tufts on the crown of their heads were the only mark of manhood allowed them, and even these, every Cossack wearing arms

had the right to pull. It was not till the conclusion of their studies that Boolba had sent them a pair of young horses, which he had selected for them out of his herd.

Boolba, to celebrate the arrival of his sons, had sent invitations to all the centurions and all the officers of his regiment; and as soon as he saw two of them coming with his old comrade the essaool[4] Dmitro Tovkach, he introduced his sons to them, saying, "Look at them, are they not pretty lads? I shall send them soon to the Ssiecha!" The guests congratulated both Boolba and the two youths, saying that that was a capital thing, and that there was no better school for young men than the Zaporoghian Ssiecha.

"Well, gentlemen brothers, sit down to table, every one where he pleases. Now, sons, before anything else, let's take some brandy!" so spoke Boolba. "God's blessing be upon us! May God give you health, my sons; to thee, Ostap, and to thee, Andrew! May he ever grant you success in war! that you may get the better of all misbelievers, Tartars, and Turks, or Poles—if Poles attempt anything against our faith. Well, give me your cup; is the brandy good? And what is the Latin for brandy? Well, son, the Romans were only so many fools; they did not even know so much as that there's brandy in the world. How do you call the fellow that wrote Latin verses? I am no great scholar, so I do not know his name; but let me see, wasn't it Horace?"

"Just see my father!" thought the elder son, Ostap, to himself; "he knows all about it, and yet feigns ignorance, the old dog!"

"I think the Abbot didn't so much as let you smell brandy,"[5] continued Tarass Boolba. "Now, own, sons, they famously thrashed your back, and whatever else a Cossack possesses, with fresh birch rods? or, perhaps, as you grew cleverer, you were flogged with scourges? and I should think not only on Saturdays, but on Wednesdays and Thursdays[6] too, you got your allowance."

"What is the use of talking about what is past?" answered Ostap; "what is past can never come back."

"Let any one try it now," said Andrew; "let any one touch us now! If a Tartar were to come within our reach, now, we would soon let him know what sort of a thing a Cossack's sabre is."

"Well said, son, well said indeed! If things stand so, I will go with you! By Heavens, I'll do it! What the devil have I to wait here for? Am I then to turn sower or farmer, or to pasture sheep or swine, and make love to my wife? Let them all perish! I am a Cossack, and will not be anything else but a Cossack! There is no war? Well, what then? I'll go with you just to have a look at the Zaporoghians! By Heavens, I will!" and old Boolba grew warmer and warmer in his speech, and at last, becoming quite fierce, rose from the table, drew himself up to his full height and stamped with his foot. "Why should it be put off? Let us ride there to-morrow! Of what use would it be for us to wait? What is this house to us? Of what use is all this furniture? Of what use this crockery?" and with these words he began knocking about and dashing on the ground jugs and dishes.

His poor old wife, seated on a bench, mournfully watched these proceedings of her husband, to which she was accustomed. She dared not interfere, but could not restrain her tears at hearing a decision so awful to her; she looked at her sons, from whom she was threatened to part so soon, and none could describe the extent of the silent intensity of sorrow which seemed to quiver in her eyes and in her convulsively compressed lips.

Boolba was stubborn to an excess. His was one of those characters, which could only take their rise in the gloomy fifteenth century, in a semi-nomad corner of Europe, at a time when the whole of primitive Southern Russia was left by its sovereign princes a prey to the fire and sword of the unconquerable Mogul invaders; when the natives of that country grew daring, after having lost hearth and roof; when they settled upon the sites of their former dwellings, within view of their terrible neighbours and of incessant danger, and learned to forget that there was any such thing in the world as fear; when after having remained dormant for centuries, the Slavonic spirit was inflamed with the love of war. Then it

was that the Cossacks broke forth, that powerful sinew of Russian nature, and then the banks of all the rivers and the valleys and rich pasturages were covered with Cossacks. Nobody could number them, and rightly did their bold comrades give answer to the Sultan, who inquired their number, "Who can tell it? all the steppe over; for every mound there is a Cossack!" In truth it was an extraordinary outburst of Russian strength; calamity struck it out of the breast of the Russian people, just as steel strikes fire out of flint. Ancient principalities had disappeared; small towns, with prickers and huntsmen, were no more; petty sovereigns exchanging their possessions had had their time. Instead of these, there arose formidable hamlets, villages and communities bound together by common danger from, and common hatred to, the foes of the Cross. History makes us acquainted how it was that their incessant struggles, and restless life, prevented Europe from falling a prey to the irresistible flood of Tartar invaders, and from being overthrown by them. The Polish kings, who had superseded the Russian princes in the possession of their wide expanse of land, although far from these their possessions, and without the means of enforcing their rule over them, understood the mission of the Cossacks and the advantages derivable from their warlike, lawless mode of life. They gave encouragement to their pursuits, nay, they even flattered them. It was under their remote sway, that Hetmans, chosen from among the Cossacks themselves, transformed hamlets and communities into regiments and regular military circuits. There was no regular standing army; not a soldier was to be seen; but in case of war or any general movement, every one, before eight days were over, appeared on horseback armed from head to foot, but receiving only a ducat from the king, and thus in a fortnight was gathered such a militia as no regular enlistments could ever have produced. The campaign once over, the warrior returned to his fields and pastures, or to the ferries over the Dnieper, betook himself to fishing, trading and brewing beer, and he became once more a free Cossack. Well might foreign writers of this period express their astonishment at the manifold accomplishments of a Cossack. No trade, no business, was unknown to him; he knew how to distil brandy out of corn, how to mend a carriage, how to grind powder; he was acquainted with blacksmith's as well as with locksmith's work; and besides all this he knew how to plunge into the vortex of the most riotous life, to drink and to carouse—as none but a Russian can. Besides the registered Cossacks, who were by duty bound to come forth in case of war, there were, at every period of great emergency, whole troops of mounted volunteers.
The essaools had nothing to do but to go through the squares and market-places of every city and village, and there, mounting on some carriage, cry aloud: "Ho! you brewers and coopers! enough of brewing your beer, lolling on your ovens, and feeding flies with the fat of your bodies! Come and seek the glory and honour of knights! And you, ploughmen, sowers, shepherds, loiterers, have done with going behind the plough and daubing your yellow boots with mud, with running after girls and destroying your knightly strength. The time is come to win a Cossack's glory!"

And these words fell like so many sparks upon dry wood. Ploughmen broke their ploughs, brewers and coopers destroyed their tubs and casks, mechanics and tradesmen sent handicraft and trade to the devil, broke the furniture in their houses, and every one, be he who he might, set off on horseback. In a word, here it was that the Russian character showed itself in its boldest and most striking outlines, and received its most powerful development.

Tarass Boolba was one of the old colonels, and a colonel of the old school too. In him seemed combined everything which makes a warrior, and his character was stamped by a stern uprightness. In those times the influence of Poland already began to be felt amongst the nobility of South Russia; many of the nobles began to adopt Polish fashions, to indulge in luxury, to keep a magnificent revenue, hawks, and huntsmen, to give banquets and entertainments. All this was displeasing to Tarass; he liked the simple manner of life of the Cossacks, and quarrelled with those of his comrades who inclined towards the Warsaw party, nicknaming them the servants of Polish lords. Ever unconquerable, he took it for granted that he was the rightful defender of orthodoxy. He went, of his own accord, into every village where the tenants complained of oppression or of additional taxes laid on the cottages, and

constituting himself judge of these grievances, he made it a rule that the sword was to be used on three occasions, viz., when the Polish commissaries did not pay due respect to the Elders, and stood covered before them; when they insulted orthodoxy, and did not observe the faith of their forefathers; and lastly, when the foes were misbelievers or Turks, against whom, according to his notions, a Christian was in every case allowed to raise his sword.

Now Tarass pictured to himself, beforehand, the pleasure he should have in bringing his sons to the Ssiecha, and in saying, "Look at them, are not these fine fellows that I have brought you!" how he would introduce them to all his old comrades, hardened in so many combats; how he would behold their first deeds in war and in carousing, which was also accounted one of the great accomplishments of a knight. At first, he had thought of sending them by themselves; but, on seeing the freshness of their manly beauty, the height and strength of their frames, his warlike spirit kindled, and he resolved to go with them himself, although nothing but the stubbornness of his own will made it requisite. He was already busy giving orders, making choice of horses and trappings for his young sons, going into the stables and barns, and indicating; the servants who were to start on the morrow with him. He deputed his authority to the Essaool Tovkach, giving him strict orders to come with his regiment at his first summons, were he to send from the Ssiecha for it. He forgot nothing, though he was rather tipsy, and his head was not yet quite clear. He even gave orders to water the horses, and to put the best and largest grained wheat into their mangers. At last he returned, tired out with his work. "Well, children, let us go to sleep, and to-morrow we shall do what God wills. No beds! we don't want beds; we will sleep in the yard."

Night had scarcely crept over the sky, but Boolba always went to rest early. He lay down upon a carpet and rolled himself up in a sheepskin cloak, because the night was rather fresh, and because he always liked when at home to be warmly covered. He was soon snoring, and every one in the yard followed his example. All who were lying about in different corners of the yard set off snoring; first of all the watchman fell asleep, for he had got more tipsy than any one on the occasion of the young masters' arrival. The poor mother alone could not sleep; she reclined on the pillow of her dear sons, who were lying side by side; she smoothed their young negligently intermingled curls, moistening them with tears. She was gazing at them, ay, gazing at them with all her soul; her whole being seemed absorbed in sight, and she could not cease gazing. With her own milk she had fed them—she had watched them grow—she had tended them—and now, she sees them near her only for a moment. "Sons, my own dear sons, what will happen to you? What is in store for you?" and tears ran down on the wrinkles which disfigured her once handsome face.

And, indeed, she was to be pitied, as were nil the women of those warlike times. For one moment only had she enjoyed love, which wits during the first impulse merely of youth and passion; and then her stern lover had quitted her for his sabre, for his comrades, and for carousing. During the whole course of the year, she saw her husband but for two or three days, and then years passed away without hearing anything about him. And, even when she happened to see him, and live with him, what a life was hers; she received nothing from him but insults, and often even blows. The caresses bestowed upon her were nothing but charity, she saw it. Strange was her existence among that mob of heartless warriors, whose features bore the bronzed colouring peculiar to the Zaporoghians. She had seen her youth glide away without enjoyment, and her beautiful fresh cheeks fade without kisses and shrivel into wrinkles before due time. All her love, all her feelings, all that is tender and passionate in a woman, all was concentrated for her in one feeling—that of a mother. And like a bird of the steppe, she feverishly, passionately, and tearfully hovered over her children. Her sons, her dear sons, are to be taken away from her; to be taken where she may never see them again. Who knows? may be in the first battle a Tartar will cut off their heads, and she will not even know where to find their corpses; perhaps those corpses, for each morsel of which, for each drop of whose blood she would give everything in the

world, those very corpses may be thrown aside, and the wild birds of prey may tear them to pieces. Sobbing, she looked in their eyes, which sleep already began to close, and she thought— "Who knows but that Boolba, on awaking, may put off the departure for some two or three days; may be he resolved to start so soon, merely from having drunk too much."

The moon had long ago risen in the heavens, and from their height shone down on the yard, covered with sleeping Cossacks, on the thick sallows, and on the high grass which had overgrown the palisade surrounding the yard. Still the mother remained sitting beside her dear sons, never taking her eyes off them for a moment, and never caring for sleep. The horses, feeling the approach of the dawn, lay down and ceased to feed; the upper leaves of the sallows began to move, and, by degrees, the murmuring current descended to the branches beneath. The mother remained sitting till dawn. She felt no weariness, and inwardly wished that the night might last still longer. Already the sonorous neighing of the foals was heard from the steppe; red streaks brightly illumined the sky. All at once Boolba awoke and sprang to his feet; he was perfectly aware of the orders he had given on the preceding day....

"Up lads, away with sleep! it is time, it is time. Give the horses their drink. Where is the old woman (so he usually called his wife)? Quick, old woman! prepare our meal—we have a long journey before us!"

The poor old woman, deprived of her last hopes, went mournfully to the house. While tearfully she was preparing everything for breakfast, Boolba issued his orders: he bustled about in the stable and himself chose the best equipment for his sons. The collegians were suddenly metamorphosed: instead of their dirty boots and shabby dresses, they appeared in red boots with silver heels; their trousers, of a tremendous width with thousands of folds, were tightly girded with a gilded belt; long leather thongs, with tassels and different requisites for the pipe, hung from their belts. Their cossackins,[7] of a fiery red cloth, were girded by brilliantly-coloured sashes, in which were stuck pistols of Turkish embossed workmanship, and sabres were dangling about their heels. Their faces, not yet sunburnt, seemed to have grown still more handsome and still fairer. Their young dark mustachios gave still more brilliancy to the healthy, robust bloom of their youth; their black sheepskin caps, with the crowns of cloth of gold, became them excellently. Poor mother! when she saw them she could not utter a word, and tears rushed into her eyes.

"Now, sons, all is ready, don't waste time," said Boolba at last. "Now, we must all, like Christians, sit down before the journey."[8]

Every one sat down, including even the servants, who had respectfully stood at the door.

"Now, mother, bless thy children!" said Boolba. "Pray God that they may be brave in war, that they may ever preserve their knightly honour, that they may ever hold fast the faith of Christ. Otherwise, 'twere better they should die, better nothing remained of them in the world. Go to your mother, children; the prayer of a mother preserves one by sea and land."

The tender mother embraced them, took two small holy images, and sobbing, hung them round their necks:—

"May the Holy Virgin—preserve you—don't forget your mother, my sons—send me word about you." She could say no more!

"Let us be gone now, children!" said Boolba. Saddled horses stood near the door of the house. Boolba sprang on his own, named "Devil," who furiously bounded aside as he felt on his back the weight of his rider, who was very stout and heavy. When the mother saw that her sons had also mounted, she rushed to the younger, whose features wore a somewhat more tender expression; she caught his stirrup, clung to his saddle, and, a picture of utter despair, would not let him loose. Two strong Cossacks gently dragged her away and carried her into the room. But when she saw them cross the gateway, in spite of her age she flew through the yard with the swiftness of a wild goat, and, with incredible strength,

stopped the horse and embraced one of her sons, with a mad, rapturous feverishness. Once more was she brought home.

Mournfully rode the young Cossacks, restraining their tears lest their father should be angry; but he, too, was agitated, although he endeavoured not to show it. The day was gray; the verdure was of a bright green; the birds seemed to sing discordantly. After having ridden for some time, they turned to look back: the farm seemed to have sunk into the earth; they could only see the two chimneys of their modest mansion and the tops of the surrounding trees—those trees, whose branches they used to climb like squirrels; but before them lay expanded the wide plain—that same plain, which might bring back to their minds the whole history of their lives, from the years when they rolled in its dew-covered grass, down to the years when they were reclining in it, awaiting some dark-browed girl, who timidly ran across it with her pretty little feet. Already—nothing is to be seen, but the pulley over the well, with the wheel tied to its top. Already the plain, across which they rode but just now, has covered all behind and looks like a hill. Farewell, childhood! Farewell, youthful sports! all of you, farewell!

II.

The three riders all proceeded in silence. Old Boolba thought of former times; he saw pass before him his youth, his bygone years, those years which are always regretted by a Cossack, who would wish that his whole life were youth only; he thought of the comrades he should meet with at the Ssiecha; he remembered who those were who had died, and those who yet remained alive. A tear might have been seen trembling in his eye, and mournfully did he droop his gray head.

Other thoughts occupied his sons. But more should be said about the sons. At twelve years old they were sent to the College of Kieff, because all' the important nobles of that time found it necessary to give an education to their sons, although it was apparently done merely for the purpose of their entirely forgetting it afterwards. Like all the collegians, they had something wild about them, having been brought up in perfect freedom. At the college, however, they got something of that external polish, which, being common to all collegians, made them so resemble one another. Ostap, the elder of the two, began his career by running away the very first year; he was brought back, mercilessly flogged, and once more set to his book. Four times did he bury his grammar in the ground, and four times, after having him horsewhipped without pity, a new one was bought for him. Yet he would no doubt have repeated the same attempt a fifth time, had not his father pledged him his word that he would have him shut up in a cloister for twenty years, and sworn that he should never see the Zaporoghian Ssiecha till he had been through the whole course of academic learning. It is worth notice that this was said by that same Tarass Boolba, who, as we have seen, laughed at all learning, and advised his children never to trouble themselves about it. From that time Ostap grew intensely assiduous, and was soon ranked among the best pupils.

The education and the practical life of those times afforded the most striking contrast. All the scholastic, grammatical, and rhetorical subtleties were decidedly inappropriate to the epoch, inapplicable to anything, and of no use in after life. Even had the studies been much less scholastic, those who studied would have found nothing to which they could have been adapted. The first rate scholars of that time were the most ignorant people in practice, because they, more than others, were removed from the experience of life. The republican form of the academical administration, as well as the great concourse of full-grown, healthy young men, could not fail to give the pupils' minds a direction quite alien to their studies. At one time bad food, at others oft-repeated punishments by hunger, then, those impulses which arise in fresh, healthy, strong youths—all this combined to give them that enterprising spirit which afterwards attained its full expansion in the Zaporoghian Ssiecha.

Hungry collegians rambled about the streets of Kieff, and rendered every one cautious. The market-women who sat in the market, as soon as they saw a collegian coming, quickly covered with their hands their pies, rolls, and pumpkin seeds, just as eagles cover their young with their wings.
The consuls, whose duty it was to watch over such of their comrades as were placed under their orders, themselves wore trouser pockets of such frightful dimensions that they could hide in them the whole contents of a tray if the market-woman happened to look aside. These collegians formed a world apart; they were not allowed to mix in the higher circles, which consisted of Polish and Russian nobles. Even the Voevoda,[9] Adam Kissel, notwithstanding the protection which he showed to the college, did not allow the collegians admittance into society, and ordered them to be treated with the greatest severity. This last injunction was, however, quite superfluous, for neither the rector nor the professors spared the rods and whips, and often at their commands the lictors[10] gave their consuls such a sound flogging, that the latter rubbed their trousers many weeks after. Many of them became indifferent to it, and thought it only a little stronger than good brandy and pepper; some found such frictions too frequent and too unpleasant, and at last took flight to the Ssiecha, if they could but find the way to it, and if they happened not to be caught during the journey.

Ostap Boolba, notwithstanding his assiduity in learning logic, and even theology, could by no means escape the inexorable rod. Of course, all this hardened his character, and gave him that firmness which is so peculiar to the Cossacks. Ostap was always reputed the best of comrades. He was not often a leader of the others in daring enterprises, such as to lay waste some orchard or kitchen-garden, but he was always among the first who joined the colours of the daring collegian who was to lead, and never on any occasion did he betray his comrades; no whip, no rods, could make him do so. Nothing but fighting and carousing had any attraction for him; never, at least, did he think of anything else. With his equals he was always open-hearted. He was good, so far as goodness was possible with such a character and at such an epoch. The tears of his poor mother had strongly impressed his mind, and might account for his depressed spirits, and the thoughtful drooping of his head.

The feelings of his younger brother, Andrew, were quicker, and in some degree, more sharpened. He showed more inclination and less difficulty for study than is usually the case with a heavy, robust character. He had more contrivance than his brother, and more frequently became the leader in expeditions of danger, and oftener, thanks to his ready wit, found means to escape punishment; while his brother Ostap, setting aside every subterfuge, took off his coat and laid himself down on the floor, without ever thinking of begging forgiveness. Andrew was as eager as his brother for warlike feats, but his heart was also open to other feelings. When he was scarcely eighteen, he felt to the quick the want of love; thoughts of women would often visit his over-heated fancy; whilst listening to philosophical disputes, he saw every moment a fresh, dark-eyed, tender face; continually there glimmered before him her round smooth bosom, her delicate, beautifully moulded bare arm; even her dress, clinging to her maidenly yet powerful form, his fancy would depict as something indescribably voluptuous. These inspirations of his passionate youthful soul, Andrew carefully hid from his comrades, for in those times it was reputed a shame and a dishonour to a Cossack to think about women, and love, before having gone through a battle. And yet, during the later years, he was no longer so often the leader of collegian parties, but was more frequently to be seen strolling about one of the lonely lanes of Kieff, overshadowed by cherry-tree gardens, which surrounded some low cottages. He also went sometimes into the aristocratic street in that part of Kieff which is now-a-days called the Old Town, where the nobility of Little Russia and Poland used to live, and where the buildings in their appearance showed more refinement.

Once, as he was gazing about the street, he was nearly caught by the wheels of the carriage of some Polish lord, and received a well-aimed cut of the whip from the frightfully mustachioed figure, who sat on the box of the carriage. The young collegian took fire at once; with inconsiderate audacity he

grasped with his powerful hand the rear wheel, and stopped the carriage. But the coachman, fearing the result, whipped the horses; they started forward, and Andrew, who fortunately had time to withdraw his arm, fell flat on the ground, with his face in the mud. The most sonorous and harmonious laughter resounded above him. He lifted up his eyes, and saw, standing at a window, a beauty, the like of whom he had never seen before. Her eyes were dark, and the whiteness of her complexion was like the snow, lighted by the rosy-coloured rays of the morning sun; she laughed with all her heart, and laughter gave additional splendour to her beauty. He remained riveted to the spot. Unconscious of everything around him, he looked at her, and, absent in mind, wiped the mud from his face, soiling it still more. Who could that lovely girl be? He tried to learn her name of the servants, who, in rich dresses, were assembled in a crowd at the gate, round a young musician, playing on the bandora[11] But the servants burst out laughing on seeing his dirty face, and no one condescended to answer him. He succeeded at last in ascertaining that the young lady was the daughter of the Voevoda of Kovno, who had come to Kieff for a certain time. Next night, with an audacity peculiar to collegians, he crept through a palisade into the garden, climbed a tree whose branches were widely spread, and leaned on the very roof of the house; from the tree he got on to the roof, and gliding down a chimney, came straight into the room of the beauty, who was just then sitting before a light, and taking her costly ear-rings out of her ears. The beautiful girl was so terrified at seeing before her a strange man, that she could not utter a word; but when she saw that the collegian remained standing, his eyes bent on the ground, and not daring, from bashfulness, to move even his hand; when she recognised him to be the same person who had fallen in the street beneath her eyes, she once more gave vent to her laughter. Besides, Andrew's features had nothing alarming in them; he was very handsome. She laughed with all her heart, and continued a long time amusing herself at his expense. The beauty was as flighty as only a Polish woman can be; but her eyes, her beautiful, her piercingly bright eyes, threw glances as lasting as constancy. The collegian remained motionless, and seemed as if all his limbs were tied up in a sack, when the Voevoda's daughter came boldly up to him, put her brilliant diadem upon his head, hung her ear-rings on his lips, and threw on his shoulders a transparent muslin chemisette with gold embroidered festoons. She dressed him out in different ways, and played with him a thousand silly tricks with the childish ease so characteristic of the giddy Poles, and which added still more to the confusion of the poor collegian. His mouth wide open, his looks riveted on her brilliant eyes, he made the most laughable figure. A noise which was heard at the door, aroused her fears. She ordered him to hide himself under the bed, and as soon as the noise was over, she called for her maid, a Tartar prisoner, and ordered her to conduct him cautiously into the garden, and thence to see him over the palisade. But this time our collegian was not so fortunate in getting over the palisade. The watchman awaking, gave him a vigorous blow over the legs, and the servants assembled by the noise, beat him in the street, long before his swift feet carried him out of their reach. After this, it was very dangerous to pass near the house of the Voevoda, the more so as his servants were numerous. Andrew saw his beauty once more in a Latin Church; she noticed him, and gave him a pleasant smile as to an old acquaintance. Once more, but only en passant, did he see her, and then the Voevoda left Kieff, and after that, instead of the beautiful dark-eyed Polish girl, a broad, coarse face looked out of her windows.

This is what Andrew was thinking about, with his head bent down, and his eyes fixed on the mane of his horse.

Meanwhile, the steppe had long ago received them in its green embrace, and its high grass, encircling them, had hidden them so that only their black Cossack's caps were now and then to be seen above it.

"Eh! eh! eh! What are you about, lads? Why so silent?" said Boolba, recovering from his meditation. "Just like monks! Come now, all at the same time! All sad thoughts to the devil! Take your pipes between your teeth, light them, set spurs to your horses, and let us take such a gallop, that no bird shall get the better of us!"

And the Cossacks slightly bending towards the manes of their horses, disappeared in the high grass. Not even their black caps were now to e seen; their course could only be followed by looking at the furrow in the grass, which they crushed with the rapidity of lightning.

The sun had long since appeared in the sky, and poured its vivifying warm rays over the steppe. All that was perplexed or dreamy about the souls of the Cossacks fled at once, and their hearts bounded within them like birds.

The farther the steppe went the grander it became. At that time the whole tract of land which now forms New Russia, even as far as the coast of the Black Sea, was but one green uninhabited waste. No plough ever furrowed its immense wavy plains of wild plants; the wild horses, which herded there, alone trampled them down. Nothing in nature could afford a more beautiful scene. The whole extent of the steppe was nothing but a green-gold ocean, whose surface seemed besprinkled with millions of different coloured flowers. Here, through the thin tall blades of the grass, were to be seen purple, blue, and violet corn-flowers; there, the pyramidal top of a yellow genistella shot up suddenly; the umbrella-shaped heads of the clover shone like so many white spots; some ears of wheat, brought heaven knows whence, were slowly ripening amongst the grass. Under their thin stems partridges were fluttering with outstretched necks. The air was filled with the calls of thousands of different birds. Goshawks remained stationary in the sky, with wings wide spread, and eyes fixed on the grass. The screams of a flock of wild geese, which like a cloud was seen moving on one side of the horizon, were re-echoed by the murmurs from some distant lake. A gull might be seen, with measured flapping of its wing, rising in the clouds, and luxuriously bathing in the blue waves of the air: behold, now it disappears in the skies, and only at times shows like a dark spot on them; there again, it turns round, and its wings gleam in the sunshine.

"The deuce take ye, O steppes! how beautiful you are!"

Our travellers stopped only a few minutes for dinner. On this occasion, the ten Cossacks who formed their escort alighted, and brought forward the barrels of corn-brandy, and the hollow pumpkins, which supplied the place of plates. The dinner consisted of nothing but bread, lard, and wheaten biscuits; one cup of brandy, and no more, was allowed to every one, just to keep up his strength, for Tarass Boolba never permitted any one to get tipsy whilst travelling. Then the journey was resumed.

As evening came on, the whole scenery of the steppe underwent a change. The last bright reflection of the sun encircled once more its variegated expanse, which gradually grew darker, so that the shades of evening might be seen coming step by step over it, making its green hue more and more black; the exhalations arose more densely; every flower, every herb sent forth sweet perfumes, and a cloud of fragant smells seemed to hang over the whole of the steppe. Over the blue-tinted sombre skies a gigantic brush seemed to have drawn broad stripes of red gold; at times were to be seen gliding like so many white flocks, light transparent clouds; the most refreshing breeze, pleasant as the sea-waves, gently ruffled the surface of the grass, and softly touched the cheek. The harmony which had filled the steppe during the day died away, and gave place to other sounds. Animals which had remained in their holes under ground during the day, came out, and made the steppe resound with their cries and hisses. The chirp of the crickets grew louder and louder. Sometimes from a distant pond was heard the cry of a swan, which rang silvery through the air.

The travellers, after choosing their halting-place, stopped under the canopy of heaven, made a fire, and warmed the kettle in which they boiled their gruel; the curling smoke floated up above in a curved line. After supper, the Cossacks lay down for sleep, after having tied the legs of their horses, which were left to feed in the grass. The Cossacks stretched themselves on their cloaks; they could see right above them the stars of the night; they could hear the numberless myriads of insects which filled the grass, whose chirping, whose whistling, whose shrill notes resounded sharply through the stillness of that hour and

the freshness of the night air, and formed together a delightful harmony. If any one happened to lift his head, or to arise, he saw all the steppe covered with the sparkling light of the glowworms. Sometimes, at different places, the sky seemed glaring with fire, which had been set to the dry reeds in some distant fields, or along the banks of some river, and then a dark line of swans, flying towards the north, suddenly lighted up a pink-silvered streak, and it seemed as if rosy scarfs were fluttering in the sombre skies. Our travellers journeyed on without any adventure. No trees met their view; on every side expanded the same endless, free, beautiful steppe.

At times only might be seen the remote blue tops of the forests growing along the banks of the Dnieper. Once only, Tarass pointed out to his sons a small black spot at a great distance in the grass, and exclaimed, "Look, children, there is a Tartar!" A small mustachioed face peered at them with its narrow eyes, sniffed the air like a harrier, and disappeared at once, seeing there were thirteen Cossacks. "Well, lads, will you try to catch the Tartar? You had better not; you will never overtake him; his steed is swifter than my 'Devil.'" Yet, fearing some hidden mischief, he took his precautions. Coming to a narrow stream, which fell into a river, he ordered his followers to enter the water on horseback, and they did not continue their journey till they had swum a long way, to hide their track. Three days later, they were near the end of their journey. The air grew colder; they felt the proximity of the Dnieper. Behold! there it sparkles in the sun, and forms a wide dark streak beneath the sky; its cold waves come nearer and nearer, and on a sudden, surround half the horizon. It was at this part of the Dnieper that, after being compressed in its course by the rapids, it reconquered its liberty, and spreading out freely, roared like the ocean; the islands thrown in its centre made it rush still more vehemently towards the banks, and its waves rolled on the even ground without having to dash over any rocks or elevations. The Cossacks dismounted, got into a ferry-boat, and after a passage of three hours, they reached the island Khortitza, where, for the time being, was the camp of the Ssiecha, which so often changed its seat.

A crowd of people stood on the bank of the river quarrelling with the ferryman. The Cossacks adjusted their horses for mounting; Tarass assumed a dignified air, tightened his belt, and proudly twirled his mustachios. His young sons, too, looked at themselves from head to foot, with some unaccountable terror, and no less unaccountable pleasure. Then they all rode together into the suburb, which was about half a verst[12] from the Ssiecha. On entering it, they were deafened by the sound of fifty blacksmith's hammers, which fell with heavy strokes in five-and-twenty forges, dug in the ground and covered with grass. Strong tanners sat in the street at their own doors, and scutched ox-hides with their powerful hands; tradespeople sat under tents, loaded with flints, steels, and gunpowder; here, an Armenian has hung up costly handkerchiefs for sale; there, a Tartar is roasting pieces of mutton rolled in dough; there, a Jew, his head stretched forward, is drawing off corn-brandy from a cask. But the first man they saw was a Zaporoghian lying asleep in the very middle of the road, his arms and legs stretched far apart. Tarass Boolba could not help stopping to admire him.

"Now, is not this a glorious sight? Ah! what a fine sight!" said he, stopping his horse; and the sight was certainly a striking one. There lay the Zaporoghian, like a lion, full length on the road; his crown tuft, proudly thrown back, was fully a foot in length; his trousers were smeared with tar, in order to show his utter contempt for the costly scarlet cloth of which they were made. After remaining for a while looking at him, Boolba continued to thread his way through a narrow street, crowded by workmen, who, in the street itself, were working at their trade, and by people of every nation, who filled this suburb of the Ssiecha, which wore the appearance of a fair, and whence the Ssiecha derived its food and clothes; for the Ssiecha itself knew nothing beyond carousing and fighting.

At last, they left the suburb and saw some koorens[13] scattered about and covered with grass, or according to the Tartar fashion with cow-hair felt. About some of the koorens stood cannons. Nowhere could be seen any palisade, or any of the low cottages with sheds on short wooden columns, like those

of the suburb. A small mound with a ditch, guarded by no living soul, was only a proof of the greatest carelessness. Some strongly-built Zaporoghians, who were lying on the very road, with their pipes between their teeth, coolly surveyed the riders, but did not even move. Tarass rode cautiously through the midst of them with his sons, and said, "Health be with you, gentlemen!"

"And with you, too;" answered the Zaporoghians.

In every direction the field was covered with motley groups of people. Their brown faces bespoke them at once to be hardened in war and inured to every privation.

So here is the Ssiecha! Here is that nest, whence take their flight all those men, as proud and strong as lions! Hence pour freedom and Cossackdom over all Ukraine!

The riders came to an extensive square, where the Rada[14] was accustomed to assemble. The first person they saw was a Zaporoghian, seated on a tub, who, having taken off his shirt, was holding it in his hand, slowly mending the holes in it. Then they were stopped in their progress by a troop of musicians, in the midst of whom was dancing a young Zaporoghian, his cap carelessly thrown on one ear and his hands wildly tossed in the air. He cried incessantly, "Quicker, quicker, musicians! and thou, Thomas, don't spare brandy for the Christians." And Thomas, with a black eye, was busily engaged in pouring out brandy for every new-comer. Near the young Zaporoghian four old ones were also dancing, sometimes with quick, tiny steps, then again with the rapidity of the wind, throwing themselves on one side, almost on the heads of the musicians, then on a sudden, bending their knees till they were almost in a sitting posture, and rushing thus from side to side, making the hard-beaten earth ring with the heavy sonorous strokes of their silver-rimmed heels. The ground gave back a rumbling sound through all the vicinity, and the air at a great distance re-echoed the noisy trampling of their boots. But there was one among the dancers who shouted still louder, and rushed about still more impetuously than the others. His long crown-lock floated in the wind, his sinewy breast was naked; he had on his warm sheepskin coat, and the perspiration poured down his brow, as from out of a jug. "Well, now, take thy coat off," said Tarass at last; "dost thou not feel the heat?"

"No, I cannot," answered the Zaporoghian.

"And why not?"

"I cannot; such is my habit, that what is once off, I give up for brandy."

And long since, indeed, had the lad had no cap, no belt to his coat, no embroidered handkerchief; they had all gone the way one might expect. The farther the crowd extended, the denser it grew; new dancers came every moment; and strange were the feelings excited at watching the freest and most furious dance the world ever beheld, and which, from the name of its mighty inventors is called the "Cossack."

"Ah, were it not for my horse!" cried Tarass, "I would, by Heavens I would, go into the dance too."

And meanwhile, amongst other people, they met some of the elderly Cossacks, with old gray crown-locks, who were held in great respect by all the Ssiecha, and had been many times chosen Elders. Tarass was not long without meeting many well-known faces. Ostap and Andrew heard nothing but greetings such as these:— "Ah, here thou art, Petcheritza!" "Good day, Kozoloop!" "In Heaven's name, whence comest thou, Tarass?" "Why art thou here, Doloto?" "Good day, Kirdiaga!" "Good day, Gostoi!" "Who would have thought to see thee, Remen!" And warriors, assembled from the whole of the loose world of Western Russia, embraced one another. Next came the questions:—"And what of Kassian? where is Borodavka? where Koloper? where Pidsyschok?" But Tarass Boolba only got for answer that Borodavka had been hanged by the Poles, that Koloper had been flayed alive by the Tartars, that Pidsyschok's head had been salted and sent in a tub to Constantinople. Old Tarass bent his

head and thoughtfully muttered, "Good Cossacks were they!"

III.

Tarass Boolba and his sons had remained already more than a week at the Ssiecha. Ostap and Andrew had not yet much profited by warlike exercises. The Zaporoghians did not like spending their time in the mimicry of war; the education and martial accomplishments of the young were acquired by experience alone, during the raging of battles which, for the same reason, were almost incessant. The Cossacks found it dull work to employ their leisure in learning discipline, and if they ever studied anything it was shooting at a target, and sometimes pursuing on horseback the wild animals of the steppes; the whole remaining time was given up to carousing—the proof of a widely diffused freedom. The whole Ssiecha presented a strange scene; it was like an unceasing festival, a banquet which had begun noisily and forgotten to end. Some Zaporoghians were occupied in different handicrafts; others had shops and busied themselves with trade; but the greater part feasted from morning till night, as long as the possibility of feasting jingled in their pockets, and as long as the conquered booty had not found its way into the hands of the tradesmen and the proprietors of brandy-shops. This universal festival had something seductive about it; it was not an assembly of men who had been driven to drunkenness by grief; it was nothing but the maddest expression of mirth. Every one who had found his way thither, forgot and at once cast off everything which had till then occupied his mind. He seemed to drive away all his past life, and to give himself up, soul and body, with the fanaticism of a new convert, to freedom and to comradeship, with men who, like himself, had no relations, nor home, nor family, and to whom nothing was left but the canopy of Heaven, and the unintermittent festival of their hearts. This gave rise to that mad gaiety, which could never have found any other source. The tales and narratives which might be heard among the groups lazily reclining upon the ground, were often so droll and breathed such lively animation, that one must needs have had the immoveable features of a Zaporoghian to have kept an indifferent countenance and never so much as curled the lip; and this, indeed, is one of the most striking features which distinguish the Southern Russian from the rest of the Russians. The mirth was provoked by wine, was attended by noise, but yet there were none of those disfigured outlines of a caricatured gaiety, which one finds in the dirty brandy shop. It was the friendly circle of schoolfellows. The only difference consisted in this, that instead of poring over books, and listening to the stupid lessons of professors, these schoolfellows made invasions, mounted on about five thousand horses; that instead of the field in which they had formerly played at ball, they now had, unguarded and uncared for, boundaries beyond which might be seen the swift head of the Tartar, and the Turk haughtily glancing from beneath his green turban. The difference was this, that instead of the forced will which had brought them together at school, they had, of their own free choice, left their fathers and mothers and fled from the parental roof. Here were to be found those who had already felt the halter dangling about their necks, and who, instead of pale-faced death, had found life, and life in its utmost gaiety. Here were those who followed the noble principle of never retaining a farthing about them. Here were those, who, thanks to the Jews, tenants of Polish lords, could always have their pockets turned inside out without the fear of losing anything. Here were all the collegians, who had not had the patience to endure the college rods, and who, of all their school learning, had not retained so much as the alphabet. But besides these, here were to be found some who knew who Horace was, who Cicero, and what the Roman Republic. Here were many who afterwards acquired distinction as officers in the army of the King of Poland. Here were many experienced volunteers who felt the noble conviction that it was quite the same thing where and why the war took place so that wars were made, and that no man of noble feelings could remain without fighting. Many more were here who had come into the Ssiecha for no other purpose, but that they might say afterwards that they had been there, and that they were hardened

warriors. But what, indeed, were the characters that could not be found here? Those who liked warfare, who liked gilded cups, who liked rich stuffs, or gold and silver coins, could at all times find employment here. Those only who worshipped womankind could find nothing to suit their taste; for no woman was allowed so much as to show her face even in the suburb of the Ssiecha.

During their abode in the Ssiecha, Ostap and Andrew were much astonished at seeing that crowds of people came, without so much as any one asking whence they came, or what were their names. They came thither as if they were returning to their own homes which they had but recently quitted. The new-comer only went to the Koschevoï Ataman,[15] who addressed him in these terms:—

"Good day! dost thou believe in Christ?

"I do;" answered the new-comer.

"And dost thou believe in the Holy Trinity?"

"I do."

"And dost thou go to church?"

"I do."

"Make the sign of the cross!"

The new-comer made it.

"Well," said the Koschevoï, "thou mayest go into whichever kooren thou pleasest."

And thus the ceremony ended.

The whole population of the Ssiecha went to the same church, which they were ready to defend to the last drop of their blood; and yet the Cossacks would never attend to fasts and abstinence. The suburb was chiefly inhabited by Jews, Armenians, and Tartars, who, incited by the love of gain, dared to live and to have shops there, knowing that the Zaporoghians never bargained, but paid as much money as their hands took out of their pockets. But the fate of these greedy tradespeople was much to be pitied; they were like those who build their houses at the foot of Vesuvius: as soon as the Zaporoghians had no money left, the most desperate among them pillaged the shops, and carried away everything without payment.

The Ssiecha consisted of upwards of sixty koorens, which were very like so many independent republics, and still more like so many boarding-schools. No one provided any furniture or food for himself; the Koorennoï Ataman[16] had charge of everything, and was called on this account "father." He kept the money, the clothes, the furniture, the flour, the oats, and even the fuel; all money was deposited with him. It was no rare occurrence that one kooren quarrelled with another; on such occasions, fighting immediately ensued. The rival koorens rushed into the field, and fought till one of them got the upper hand, and then all ended in a general carouse.

Such was this Ssiecha, which had so many attractions for young men.

Ostap and Andrew plunged at once with the heedlessness of youth into this sea of pleasure, forgetting in no time their father's roof, the college, and all that had till then occupied their thoughts, and they gave themselves entirely up to this new mode of life. Everything was strange to them; the loose habits of the Ssiecha, its unsophisticated laws and administration, which even then seemed to them too severe in such a self-willed community. If a Cossack had committed theft, were it but of the most insignificant rubbish, his fault was reputed to be a shame to the whole community; he was, as a dishonourable person, tied to a pillory, and beside him was placed a club, with which every one who passed by might give him a blow, until the criminal expired. An insolvent debtor was fastened to a cannon,and remained

there till some of his comrades ransomed him and paid his debts. But the greatest impression made on Andrew was produced by the terrible penalty prescribed for murder. Before his eyes, a hole was dug in the ground, the murderer was put into it alive, and over him was placed the coffin containing the corpse of the man whom he had murdered; then both were covered with earth, and the hole was filled up. For a long time the dreadful ceremony of this punishment haunted Andrew, and he thought he saw again and again the man buried alive with the terrible coffin.and over him was placed the coffin containing the corpse of the man whom he had murdered; then both were covered with earth, and the hole was filled up. For a long time the dreadful ceremony of this punishment haunted Andrew, and he thought he saw again and again the man buried alive with the terrible coffin.and over him was placed the coffin containing the corpse of the man whom he had murdered; then both were covered with earth, and the hole was filled up. For a long time the dreadful ceremony of this punishment haunted Andrew, and he thought he saw again and again the man buried alive with the terrible coffin.

Both youths soon gained the best repute among the Cossacks. Often did they go together with some comrades of their kooren, sometimes with the whole kooren, and with other koorens too, to shoot in the steppes an innumerable quantity of wild birds, stags, and goats; or they resorted to the lakes, rivers, and arms of the Dnieper, assigned to every kooren by lot, to throw their fishing nets and bring to land a rich booty of fish, sufficient to feed the whole kooren. It was not as yet a trial of true Cossack life, but still they succeeded in distinguishing themselves from among other youths by their audacity and their dexterity in everything. They never missed their aim when shooting, and they swam across the Dnieper against the current, an exploit for which every new-comer was triumphantly admitted into the assemblies of the Cossacks.

But Tarass was preparing a new scene of action for them; he did not like this idle mode of life; he desired real activity for them. After ruminating for a while how to raise the Ssiecha on some daring enterprise, where one might find true knightly exploits to perform, he, at last, went one day to the Koschevoï, and said to him, abruptly:

"Koschevoï, it is high time for the Zaporoghians to take the air in the field."

"There is nowhere to take it," answered the Koschevoï, taking his pipe out of his mouth, and spitting-on one side.

"How so? Nowhere? There are the Turks; there are the Tartars!"

"We cannot go either against Turks or against Tartars," answered the Koschevoï, coolly resuming his pipe.

"And why not?"

"So it is; we have promised peace to the Sultan."

"But is he not an unbeliever? Well, do not the Scriptures order us to combat all unbelievers?"

"We have no right to do it; had we not sworn by our faith, well, maybe we might have done it; but now, no, we cannot."

"Why can we not? Why dost thou say we have no right? Here have I two sons, both of them young men. Neither the one nor the other have ever seen war, and thou sayest, 'we have no right;' and thou sayest, 'the Zaporoghians cannot go to war.'"

"So it must be."

"So then, the Cossack's strength must run to seed? So men must end their lives like so many dogs, without having been of any use to their country, or to Christendom? What do we live for, then? What the devil is the use of our life; tell me that? Thou art a sensible man; there was some reason for electing

thee Koschevoï; tell me, what do we live for?"

The Koschevoï left the question unanswered. He was a stubborn Cossack; he remained silent for a while, and then said, "Nevertheless, there can be no war."

"So there will be no war?" once more asked Tarass.

"No."

"So it is of no use to think of it?"

"It is of no use."

"Well, wait a little, thou—devil's fist!" said Boolba to himself. "I'll teach thee to know me!" And he resolved on the spot to take his revenge of the Koschevoï.

After having talked first with one and then another, he made up a drinking party, and a number of tipsy Cossacks rushed to the public square; here, tied to a pole, were the kettle-drums, which were used for summoning the rada[17] but not finding the sticks, which were in charge of an official called doobish, they caught up logs of wood, and began beating the drums with them. The first who appeared on hearing the sound of the drums was the doobish, a tall one-eyed man, whose only eye was still very sleepy.

"Who dares to beat the drum?" cried he.

"Be silent; take thy sticks, and beat the drum when thou art ordered to do so," answered the tipsy elders.

The doobish complied at once, and took out the sticks, which he had brought in his pocket, being well acquainted with the usual end of such occurrences. The kettle-drums resounded, and soon dark crowds of Zaporoghians were seen swarming like bees into the square. All assembled in a circle, and after the third beating of the drum, came at last the chiefs: the Koschevoï with the mace, token of his dignity; the judge, with the seal of the Ssiecha; the secretary, with his inkstand, and the essaool with the staff. The Koschevoï, and the other dignitaries, took off their caps, and bowed on every side to the Cossacks, who stood haughtily holding their arms a-kimbo.

"What means this assembly? What do you wish, gentlemen?" said the Koschevoï.

Clamours and scolding words put a stop to his speech.

"Lay down thy mace, lay it down directly, devil's son!—we do not want thee any more!" shrieked some Cossacks from the crowd. Some of the sober koorens seemed to resist, but tipsy and sober koorens came to blows. The shouts and noise became general.

The Koschevoï tried to speak, but knowing that the infuriated self-willed crowd might perhaps beat him to death for it, and that such was almost always the end of such riots, he bowed very low, laid down the mace, and disappeared among the people.

"Do you order, gentlemen, that we too lay down the tokens of our rank?" said the judge, the secretary, and the essaool, ready to resign the seal, the inkstand, and the staff.

"Not you; you may remain; we only wanted to drive away the Koschevoï, because he is an old woman, and we need a man for a Koschevoï!"

"Whom will you choose for your Koschevoï?" asked the dignitaries.

"Choose Kookoobenko!" cried one side.

"We will not have Kookoobenko!" cried the other. "'Tis early for him; his mother's milk is yet wet upon

his lips!"

"Let Shilo be the Ataman," cried some. "Shilo must be Koschevoï!"

"Away with Shilo!" shouted the angry crowd.

"Is he a Cossack, to have thieved like a Tartar, the dog's son I To the devil with the drunkard Shilo!"

"Let us choose Borodaty—Borodaty!"

"We will not have Borodaty; a curse upon Borodaty!"

"Shout for Kirdiaga," whispered Tarass Boolba.

"Kirdiaga, Kirdiaga," shouted the crowd. "Borodaty! Borodaty!"—"Kirdiaga! Kirdiaga!"

"Shilo!"—"The devil take Shilo!"—"Kirdiaga!"

Each of the proposed candidates, on hearing his name shouted, instantly quitted the crowd, to leave no room for suspecting his personal influence in the election.

"Kirdiaga! Kirdiaga!" was heard above all.

"Borodaty!"

Blows succeeded to words, and Kirdiaga's party got the better.

"Go and fetch Kirdiaga!" was now the cry.

Some ten Cossacks directly stepped out of the crowd; many of them hardly stood upon their legs, such was the strength of the spirits they had swallowed; they went straight to Kirdiaga, to notify to him his election.

Kirdiaga, a clever old Cossack, had already been some time seated in his kooren, and looked as if quite unconscious of what had just taken place. "What do you want, gentlemen?" asked he.

"Go; thou art elected to be the Koschevoï."

"Be merciful, gentlemen!" said Kirdiaga. "I am by no means worthy of such an honour; I have not sense enough for a rank like that; is there no one better than I to be found in the whole Ssiecha?"

"Go, when thou art told to go!" cried the Zaporoghians. Two of them took hold of his arms, and in vain did he endeavour to stay his feet. He was at last brought into the square, pushed from behind by blows and pokes, receiving such scoldings and admonitions as—"Don't draw back, thou devil's son!" "Take the honour, dog, when they give it to thee!"

In such a manner Kirdiaga was brought into the midst of the Cossack circle.

"Gentlemen!" cried those who had brought him, "are you willing to have this Cossack for your Koschevoï?"

"We are, all of us!" shouted the crowd; and the field resounded far and wide with the cry.

One of the elders took up the mace, and offered it to the newly-elected Koschevoï. Kirdiaga refused it, according to custom. The elder offered it a second time; Kirdiaga refused it again; and only after the third invitation, did he take up the mace. A clamour of approval arose from the crowd, and again far and wide the field resounded with the Cossacks' shout. Now stepped out from the midst of the people four of the oldest Cossacks, with gray crown-locks, and gray mustachios (no very old folks were to be found in the Ssiecha, for no Zaporoghian ever died a natural death); each of them took a handful of earth, which recent rain had turned to mud, and put it upon Kirdiaga's head. Down from his head ran the wet earth, which flowed over his mustachios and cheeks, and soiled all his face with mud. But

Kirdiaga remained standing upright, and returned thanks to the Cossacks for the honour they had bestowed upon him.

So ended the clamorous election. It remains unknown whether others rejoiced in it as much as Boolba: first, for having taken his revenge on the late Koschevoï; and secondly, because Kirdiaga was his old comrade, who had been with him in the same campaigns, over sea and land, and had shared the same hardships and labours of warfare. The crowd dispersed immediately, in order to rejoice over the election; and a revel ensued such as Ostap and Andrew had not yet seen. The brandy-shops were ransacked; mead, brandy, and beer were carried off without any payment being made; the masters of the shops were glad to be suffered to escape untouched. The whole of the night passed in noise and songs, and the moon, rising in the sky, shone for a long time over the hands of musicians walking about the streets with bandooras, torbans, and round balalaikas,[18] and over the group of the singers who were kept in the Ssiecha to chant in the church, and to sing the praises of the feats of the Zaporoghians.

At last, tipsiness and fatigue began to get the better of the strong heads; and now began to be seen here and there a Cossack rolling on the ground. Here, two comrades, embracing one another, have grown sentimental, and both roll down weeping. There, a whole crowd has lain down together. There is one, who after fidgetting very much about the most commodious manner of lying down, has stretched himself full length on a log. The last, whose head was somewhat stronger, remained still uttering incoherent sentences; but he, too, finished by submitting to the effects of brandy, and when he fell like the rest, the whole of the Ssiecha was asleep.

IV.

The very next day, Tarass Boolba was already in consultation with the new Koschevoï how to raise the Zaporoghians on some war business. The Koschevoï was a clever, cunning Cossack; he knew the Zaporoghians from top to toe, and at once said, "We cannot infringe our oath—we cannot, on any account." But after having kept silence for some time he added, "Never mind, we can; we will keep our oath, but we will find out something or other. Manage somehow to get the people together, not, however, in my name, but as if of their own free will. You understand how to do it; and we, with the other dignitaries, will rush into the square as if we knew nothing of the matter."

Scarcely an hour had passed since this conversation, when on a sudden the kettle-drums were beaten. All the Cossacks, the slightly tipsy as well as those who had not yet recovered their senses, appeared at once. Thousands of Cossack caps all at once covered the square. A rumour arose, "What's the matter? why did they beat the call? on what account?" At last, here and there were to be heard sentences, "Why is the Cossack's strength to be lost? Why is there no war? The officials only think of fattening themselves! Righteousness seems to have left the world!" Other Cossacks began by listening and then joined in also, "Truly, there is no righteousness in the world."

The officials seemed astonished at hearing such things. At last the Koschevoï stepped forward and said, "Gentlemen Zaporoghians! will you let me make a speech?

"My speech will be, gentlemen, about this,—but may be you know it better yourselves;—that many Zaporoghians have gone into debt in the brandy-shops, to Jews as well as to their comrades, and into such debt that no devil will now give credit to any one. Then, again, my speech is about this, that there are many lads who have never so much as seen what war is; whereas you know, gentlemen, that no young man can ever remain without war. What kind of Zaporoghian is he who has never, not even once, vanquished an unbeliever?"

"He speaks well," thought Boolba.

"But do not think, gentlemen, that I am now speaking for the purpose of breaking peace! God forbid! I am only just mentioning facts. Now, with respect to God's temple, it is sinful to tell in what a state it is. Thanks be to God, the Ssiecha has now stood for so many years, and yet till now—I do not speak of the exterior of the church—-but even the images inside have no decorations. No one has ever thought to have even a silver cloth put upon any one of them;[19] the church has only received that which was bequeathed to it by certain Cossacks; but even these donations were very poor, for the donors during their lifetime had spent everything they had in brandy. But all this I do not tell you to induce you to begin war against the misbelievers; we have promised peace to the Sultan, and it would be a great sin not to keep it, because we have sworn by our faith."

"What does he mean by all this nonsense?" said Boolba to himself.

"So, gentlemen, you see that we cannot begin war; knightly honour forbids it. But, according to my poor understanding, what I should say is this—let us send the young people in our boats; let them take a run on the coasts of Anatolia. What do you think of that, gentlemen?"

"Let us all go!" cried the crowd on every side. "Every one of us is ready to die for our faith!"

The Koschevoï was alarmed; he had not at all meant to have raised the whole Ssiecha; he thought it unfair to break the peace. "Let me, gentlemen, say a few words more."

"Enough!" shouted the Zaporoghians; "thou wilt say nothing better!"

"If such be your will, well you must have it. I am but the servant of your will. It is well known that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Nothing better can be settled than what the whole of the Ssiecha has settled. I consider only this. You know, gentlemen, that the Sultan will not fail to take his revenge for the pleasure that the lads will have. And in the meanwhile we should have kept ourselves in readiness; our forces should have been fresh, and we should have feared nobody—while now, during our absence, the Tartars may fall on the Ssiecha. Tartars are nothing but Turkish dogs; they do not fall on you face to face, and will not come into the house so long as the master is at home; but they may bite our heels from behind and painfully may they bite us. And, as we are now about this matter—to speak the truth, we have not enough boats, and the store of powder is not sufficient if all of us are to go. However, I am ready. I am happy to be the servant of your will."

The cunning Ataman stopped. Groups began to confer together; the atamans of the koorens held council; and, as luckily few remained tipsy, all agreed to follow the prudent course.

Immediately some of the men crossed the Dnieper to fetch the treasure of the Ssiecha, and part of the arms taken from their enemies; they were kept in inaccessible hiding-places, in the reeds along the banks of the river. All the other Cossacks rushed to the boats to inspect them, and to put them in readiness for use. In a minute the banks of the river were covered with people; carpenters came with axes in their hands; young Zaporoghians as well as elderly ones; the latter, sunburnt, broad-shouldered, thick-footed, with gray hair in their mustachios, stood knee deep in the water, and dragged the boats into the river by means of strong cords. Others were bringing timber and balks ready dried. Here some were nailing planks on a boat; there a boat, keel upwards, was being caulked and pitched; in another place, according to the Cossack custom, long bundles of reeds were bound to the sides of the boats, to prevent them from being capsized by the sea waves; and still farther all along the river fires were kindled and tar boiled in copper kettles for tarring the boats. The experienced and elderly Cossacks gave their advice to the young ones. Noise and clamours arose from every side. The banks of the river were all alive with the stir and bustle.

At this moment a great ferry-boat came near the island. The men who were standing in it had already, at a distance, begun to wave their arms. They were Cossacks and dressed in coats falling to rags. The miserable dress which they wore (some of them had nothing about them but their shirt and a short pipe

in their mouth) showed at once that they had recently escaped from misfortune, or that they had been feasting until they had spent all that they had about their persons. From among them came forward, a short, thickset, broad-shouldered Cossack, some fifty years old. He shrieked louder than any, and waved his arms in the most discordant manner. But the cries and the talking of the workmen prevented him from being heard.

"What brings you here?" asked the Koschevoï, while the ferry-boat was landing. All the workmen, stopping in their work with raised axes and other instruments, looked on in expectation.

"Misfortune!" shouted the thickset Cossack from the ferry-boat.

"What misfortune?"

"Gentlemen Zaporoghians, let me address you?"

"Speak on!"

"Or, may be, you wish to convoke a rada?"

"Speak, we are all here!" cried the people with one accord.

"Have you, then, heard nothing about what has happened in the hetman's dominions?"[20]

"And what is the matter there?" asked the ataman of one of the koorens.

"What is the matter! It seems the Tartars must have well boxed your ears that you heard nothing!"

"Tell, then, what did happen there!"

"Such things have happened that, since you were born and christened, you never saw the like of them!"

"Speak, then, at once; and say what has happened, thou son of a dog!" cried one among the crowd, losing patience.

"Such times are come that even the holy churches are no longer ours!"

"How so?"

"Jews are made landlords thereof.[21] If one does not pay the toll to the Jew no mass can be performed."

"What nonsense art thou saying?"

"And if the cursed Jew does not put, with his damned finger, a mark upon the holy passover, the passover cannot be consecrated!"

"He lies, gentlemen brothers! This cannot be, that an unclean Jew should put a sign upon the holy passover!"

"Listen, only! I have more to tell you. The Latin priests now drive over all Ukraine in chariots. But the evil is not in their driving in chariots: the evil is in the chariots being no longer drawn by horses but by orthodox Christians. Hear me! I have more to tell you:—They say that Jewesses are now making themselves petticoats out of our priests' vestments. These are the things that happen in Ukraine, gentlemen! And you are here resting and carousing in your Ssiecha! Truly, it seems the Tartars have put you into such a fright, that you have no eyes left to see, no ears to hear what passes in the world!"

"Stop! Stop!" interfered the Koschevoï, who had remained standing with his eyes fixed upon the ground, as well as all the Zaporoghians, who in important business never obeyed the first impulse, but kept silent, and in their silence gathered the stern force of indignation. "Stop! let me say my word, too! And what did you do? you—may your father be beaten by the devil! Had you no sabres, then? Had you none? How did you let such profanations happen?"

"How did we let such profanations happen? I should like to have seen you try to stop them when there were fifty thousand Poles, and—there is no use to conceal it—when there were some among us, the cursed dogs, who went over to the Polish faith, too!"

"And your hetman and your colonels? what did they do?"

"Our colonels did such doings, that God forbid any one else should do the same!"

"How so?"

"Why, so that the hetman now lies roasted in a copper ox at Warsaw, and the arms and heads of our colonels are carried to the fairs to be shown to the people.[22] Such were the doings of our colonels!"

A shudder of horror ran through the whole crowd. A moment's silence reigned among it, like that which immediately precedes a terrible storm, then all at once a murmur arose and every one gave vent to his indignation.

"Jews renting Christian churches! Popish priests to be driving about on orthodox Christians! Such torments to be suffered on Russian soil from accursed Papists! So to treat the hetman and the colonels! This must not be—this shall not be!" Speeches of this kind were heard on all sides.

The Zaporoghians went on shouting and felt their strength. It was no longer the hum of a giddy people; strong and heavy characters were now aroused, who, if they were long before turning red-hot, yet, when once red-hot, kept their internal heat a long time.

"Let us hang all the Jews!" cried a voice from the crowd; "let them not make petticoats for their Jewesses out of our priests' robes! Let them not put signs on holy passovers! We will drown all the accursed race in the Dnieper."

These words, uttered by some one from the crowd, flew like lightning from one to another and the people rushed to the suburb with the intention of putting all the Jews to death. The poor sons of Israel, losing the last remains of their almost always diminutive spirit, hid themselves in empty brandy casks, in ovens, and even crept under the petticoats of their Jewesses. But the Cossacks found them out everywhere.

"Most illustrious gentlemen!" shouted a Jew, as tall and as long as a hop-pole, thrusting forth his miserable face, all contorted by fright, from amidst a group of his comrades, "most illustrious gentlemen! let us tell you only one word! We will tell you such a thing as you never heard of before! Such an important thing, that words cannot say how important it is!"

"Let them say it!" said Boolba, who always liked to give a hearing to the accused party.

"Most serene gentlemen!" said the Jew; "such gentlemen nobody ever saw before, by Heavens! never! Such good, such kind, such brave gentlemen never were before in the world!" His voice was choked and trembling with fear. "How could it be that we should ever have thought anything bad about the Zaporoghians! Those that are renting churches in Ukraine are not our people at all! by Heavens, they are not ours! They are no Jews! The devil knows what they are! They are people worthy to be spit at, and nothing more. Here are witnesses for me. Say I not true, Shlema? or thou, Shmool?"

"By Heavens, so it is!" answered Shlema and Shmool, both in ragged caps,[23] and both pale as chalk from fright.

"We have never yet been on the side of your enemies," continued the tall Jew; "and as for the Papists, we do not even wish to know them; may the devil haunt their sleep! We are for the Zaporoghians, like bosom-brothers!"

"You, the brother of the Zaporoghians!" said one from the crowd. "That will never be, cursed Jews!

Gentlemen, into the Dnieper with them all! Let us drown every one of the accursed race."

"These words were the signal for seizing the Jews and throwing them into the river. Pitiful shrieks resounded on every side; but the stern Zaporoghians only laughed as they saw the Jews' slippered feet beating the air. The poor orator, who had called down this storm upon his own head, jumped out of his coat, which some one had already laid hold of, and left in a dirty tight waistcoat, grasped the feet of Boolba, and in a whining voice entreated him: 'Mighty lord! Most illustrious lord! I knew your brother, the late lamented Dorosh! He was a warrior who was an ornament to all chivalry! It was I who gave him eight hundred sequins, when he stood in need of his ransom from the Turks.'"

"Didst thou know my brother?" asked Tarass.

"By Heavens, I knew him! a generous lord was he!"

"What is thy name?"

"Yankel."

"Very well," said Tarass; then, after thinking for a while, he turned towards the Cossacks and said, "If we want to do it, we shall always find time to hang the Jew; but, for the present let me have him." After which Tarass took him to his chariots, which were guarded by his own Cossacks, "Crawl under that waggon, lie there and do not move, and you, my lads, keep watch over the Jew."

Having said this, he repaired to the square where the crowd had been for some time assembling. They had all with one accord left off mending the boats, as the campaign now impending was to be led over land; and, instead of boats, chariots and steeds were now required. Now all, both young and old, were to take the field, and by a decision of the elders, of the atamans of all the koorens, and of the Koschevoï, as well as by the common assent of all the Zaporoghian Ssiecha, it was resolved to push straight into Poland, and to avenge the sufferings and humiliation of the Cossack's religion and glory; to pillage every town, set fire to every hamlet and every corn-field, and make the Cossack name once more renowned over all the steppes. Every one donned his war dress and armour. The Koschevoï seemed suddenly to have grown to double his former size; he was no longer the flattering accomplisher of the giddy wishes of a free people; he was now the commander with unlimited authority; he was a despot who knew but to command. All the knights, lately so self-willed and idle, now stood arrayed in ranks, with their heads respectfully bent, not daring so much as to lift their eyes while he was giving his orders without any noise or haste, but slowly and composedly as an old and experienced master of his art, who had more than once accomplished feats cleverly devised.

"Look, look well about you!" Thus he spoke. "Put to rights the waggons and the tar-pail for pitching the wheels. Try your arms. Don't take much clothing: a shirt and two pairs of trowsers for each Cossack, a pot of dried oatmeal, another of pounded millet—more than this no one must have. There will be plenty of provisions in the baggage waggons. Every Cossack must have a couple of horses. Then we must take some two hundred bullocks; because bullocks will be required for passing fords and marshy places. And above all, gentlemen, keep order. I know there are some of you who, directly any booty falls into their hands, are quite ready to seize every rag of nankeen, just as well as costly stuffs, were it but to wrap up their feet.[24] Leave off such devilish habits; throw away all the petticoats, and keep nothing but arms (if good ones come in your way) and gold and silver coins, because these are easy to carry and may be wanted when the time comes. And now, gentlemen, I tell you beforehand if any one is found to be tipsy during the march, no trial will be allowed him: I will have him dragged to the waggons, and—whoever he may be, were he the bravest of the brave—he shall be shot on the spot and thrown without interment to the birds of prey—for a drunkard on march is not worthy of Christian burial. Young men! obey in everything the older ones. If any one is touched by a bullet, or gets a sabre wound in the head or anywhere else, don't pay too much attention to such trifles; mix up a charge of powder in a dram of

brandy, swallow it all at once, and all will be over—no fever will ensue. On a wound, if it be not too large, only put some earth, which ought to be first kneaded with spittle in the palm of the hand: the wound will dry at once. Now, to business! my lads; to business, and no hurry!"

So spoke the Koschevoï; and as soon as he had done all the Cossacks went to their business. The whole of the Ssiecha had all at once grown sober, and nowhere could have been found even one tipsy man, as if no such thing had ever existed among the Cossacks. Some mended the hoops of the wheels and put new axle-trees to the carts; others brought sacks of provisions to the waggons; some stowed away the arms; others drove horses and bullocks. On all sides was heard the trampling of horses, the experimental firing of guns, the jingling of sabres, the bellowing of bullocks, the creaking of carts, the talk, the clamours, the shouts of the drivers. Presently the whole of the Cossack army drew up in line along the field, and he who attempted to run from its head to its tail would have had a long run before him.

A priest was saying mass in the small wooden chapel. He sprinkled all the people with holy water: they all kissed the cross; and, as the army set in motion, and was leaving the Ssiecha, all the Zaporoghians turned back their heads and said, almost in the same words, "Farewell, our mother! may God preserve thee from every impending evil!"

As Tarass Boolba rode through the suburb, he saw that his Jew, Yankel, had already set up a tent and was selling flints, turnscrews, powder, and various other requisites of war likely to be needed on the way—even rolls and loaves.

"What a devil of a Jew!" thought Tarass, and riding up to him said, "Fool! why art thou sitting here? dost thou wish to be shot like a sparrow?"

Yankel, instead of answering, drew nearer to him and making a gesture with both his hands, as if he were about to disclose some mystery, said, "Let my lord only hold his peace and not tell it to any one. Among the Cossack waggons there is one which is mine. I bring every requisite provision for the Cossacks, and during the march I will sell everything at such reduced prices that no Jew has ever sold at such before! By Heavens, I will! by Heavens!"

Tarass Boolba shrugged his shoulders, astonished at the Jewish nature, and rode away to the army.

V.

In a short time the whole of the south-east of Poland became a prey to terror. Everywhere the news had spread, "The Zaporoghians! the Zaporoghians are coming!" All those who could save themselves by flight, used to run away in those times, so disordered, so astonishingly careless, when no fortresses, no castles were built, but when men set up some temporary thatched dwelling, thinking it useless to lose either money or labour on what was doomed to be destroyed in the next Tartar invasion! The alarm was general: one changed his oxen and his plough for a horse and a gun, and repaired to the regiments; another hid himself, driving away his cattle and carrying off everything possible. Now and then were to be found some who encountered the strangers with armed hands, but always with a bad result; the greater part hurriedly took flight. Every one knew how hard it was to contend with the Zaporoghians, warriors hardened in warfare, and who, even in their self-willed licence, kept a pre-concerted order in battle. The mounted Cossacks rode without encumbering or over-exerting the horses; the infantry steadily followed the waggons, and the whole army moved only during the night, taking rest by day in open places, uninhabited tracts and forests, of which there were then plenty. Spies were sent in advance to gather information and to reconnoitre. And oftentimes the Zaporoghians appeared where they were the least expected; then the only thing was to bid farewell to life; the hamlets became the prey of

flames; the cattle and horses, which could not be carried off by the Cossacks, were slaughtered on the spot. They seemed rather to be carousing than carrying on a campaign. But the hair would stand on end at the relation of the terrible feats of cruelty of those half-savage times which were everywhere accomplished by the Zaporoghians. Children were put to the sword; women's breasts cut away; the skin torn from the leg as far as the knee of those who were left free—such was the terrible payment of the Cossacks for past debts.

The abbot of a monastery, hearing of their approach, sent two monks to them to say they had no right to act thus, as the Zaporoghians and Poland were at peace; that they were infringing their duty towards the king, and at the same time violating the law of nations.

"Tell the reverend father from me and from all the Zaporoghians," answered the Koschevoï, "that he has nothing to fear; the Cossacks are as yet only just lighting their pipes."

And soon after, the majestic abbey was enshrouded in devastating flames, and its gigantic Gothic windows looked with severe aspect through the occasionally disunited waves of the conflagration. Crowds of flying monks, Jews and women, soon found those towns where there was any hope to find any protection in the number of the garrison and in the thickness of the walls. At times the government sent help; but these few detachments, coming too late, either could no longer find the Cossacks or took fright, turned back at the first encounter and fled away on their swift horses. It happened, however, that some of the king's captains, who had been victorious in previous battles, resolved to unite their strength and put a stop to the progress of the Zaporoghians. It was on such occasions that our young Cossacks were put to the trial: they were strangers to pillage, careless about booty, or about fighting a weak foe; but they were inflamed with the desire of exhibiting their prowess before their older comrades—of fighting hand to hand with the brisk and boastful Pole, who came dashing upon his fiery steed, the flowing sleeves of his cloak flying behind him in the wind. The school was amusing to them. They had already taken a great many horse-trappings, costly swords and guns. One month ago they were but half-fledged nestlings; their nature was now quite changed; they were grown men; even their features, which till then had the meekness of youth, now bore a menacing and strongly marked expression.

Old Tarass was delighted to see both his sons always among the foremost. Ostap seemed to have been born to tread the path of war, and to accomplish difficult feats of arms. Never losing his presence of mind—on no occasion alarmed; but with a coolness quite unnatural in a young man of twenty-two, he understood at the first glance the whole of the danger and the position of things, and on the spot found the means of avoiding difficulty, but avoided it only to be the more sure of surmounting it. His movements were now stamped with the certainty of experience, and the propensities of the future captain might unerringly be traced in him. His body breathed forth strength—his knightly qualities already made him like the mighty lion.

"Oh! that fellow will make in time a good colonel!" said old Tarass; "by Heavens, he will be a good colonel, and such a one, that he will excel his father!"

Andrew gave himself up to the bewitching music of bullets and swords. He understood not what it is to consider, or to calculate, or to measure the strength on one side and on the other. In battle he saw but a frantic luxury and delight; he found something festive in those moments when his brain was on fire—when everything glimmered confusedly before his eyes—when heads flew about—when horses fell with a crash on the ground, and he himself went galloping amidst the whistling of bullets and the clashing of swords, striking on every side and never feeling the strokes which he received. And old Tarass more than once was amazed at seeing Andrew, induced only by his own vehemence, rush on such deeds as no cool-minded and reflective man would have ever undertaken, and achieve solely by the madness of the attack, which could not but astonish the oldest warriors. Old Tarass wondered at Andrew and said, "This one, too, is a good warrior—may the fiend not take him! Not such a one as

Ostap; but still a good—yes, a very good warrior."

It was decided that the army should push its march straight to the city of Doobno, where, as the rumour went, there was much money and many rich inhabitants. The march was accomplished in a day and a half, and the Zaporoghians appeared under the walls of the town. The citizens resolved to defend it to the last, and preferred dying in the squares and in the streets before their houses to letting the foe enter their city. A high earthen rampart surrounded it; where the rampart was lower there projected a stone wall, or a house converted into a battery, or at least a strong wooden palisade. The garrison was strong, and felt the importance of its duty. The Zaporoghians at first rushed at the ramparts, but were stopped by murderous volleys of grape-shot. The burghers and citizens of the town seemed also not to wish to remain idle, and stood in crowds on the town wall. Their looks expressed the desperation of resistance. Even women took part in the contest; and stones, casks, and pots flew down on the Zaporoghians; pitch and sacks of sand blinded their eyes.

The Zaporoghians did not like fighting against fortresses; sieges were not their business. The Koschevoï gave orders for a retreat, and said, "Never mind, gentlemen brothers, let us withdraw; but may I be rather a cursed Tartar, and not a Christian, if we allow any one to escape from the town. Let them, the dogs, perish Dy hunger!"

The army after retreating surrounded the town, and, having nothing to do, began to lay waste the country around; setting fire to the neighbouring hamlets and corn-ricks; driving herds of horses into the unreaped corn-fields, where, as if on purpose, stood the full waving ears, the produce of an abundant crop which this year had brought to all labourers. The besieged watched with horror the destruction of their means of subsistence. The Zaporoghians, in the mean time, drew up their waggons into two files all round the town, and, after dividing their encampment into koorens, as in the Ssiecha, played at leap-frog, at pitch and toss, and looked with killing coolness at the town. Bonfires were lighted at night; the cooks of each kooren boiled buckwheat in enormous copper kettles; sleepless sentinels stood all night long by the bonfires.

The Zaporoghians, however, soon began to grow weary of inactivity, principally from the tediousness of sobriety unconnected with any exertion. The Koschevoï found it even necessary to double the proportion of brandy—a practice sometimes used with the Cossacks when they were not engaged in any difficult enterprise. The young Cossacks, especially the sons of Tarass Boolba, were displeased with this mode of life. Andrew evidently was overpowered by its dulness.

"Stupid boy," said Tarass to him, "the Cossack who knows how to wait, becomes an Ataman.[25] He is not a good warrior who merely does not lose his presence of mind in danger; but he is a good warrior who does not become dull even in inactivity, and who, notwithstanding all impediments, will end by attaining his aim."

But fiery youth is no match to an old man. Both have different natures, and both look with different eyes at the same thing.

While the siege was going on, the regiment of Tarass came to join the besiegers. The Essaool Tovkach brought it; two more essaools, the secretary, and the other officials of the regiment, also came with it; the whole of this reinforcement numbered more than four thousand Cossacks. Many of them were volunteers who had come of their own accord without being summoned, as soon as they had heard of the impending business. The essaools had been intrusted by the wife of Tarass to bring her blessing to her sons, and to forward to each of them a cypress image brought from one of the monasteries of Kieff. The two brothers hung the holy images round their necks, and involuntarily gave way to their fancy at this remembrance of their old mother. What omen did this blessing bring them? Was it a blessing for vanquishing the foe, and a pledge of their gay return to their native country with booty and glory, which should be the subject of eternal songs for the players of the bandoora? or was it.... But unknown is the

future! and it stands before man like the autumn fog which rises over marshes: birds are flying in it upwards and downwards, flapping their wings and seeing not one another —the dove without seeing the hawk, the hawk without seeing the dove—and every one without knowing how near he may be to death.

Ostap had long since resumed his occupations, and was going to his kooren; but Andrew, without being able to account for it, felt a heaviness at his heart. The Cossacks had already finished their supper; evening had long closed in, and a beautiful July night had encircled the earth in its embrace. Still, Andrew did not return to his kooren—did not go to sleep—but stood gazing at the picture before him. Numberless stars glimmered with a bright translucent twinkling over the skies. The field was covered with carts, placed without order, from which hung tar-pots all dripping with tar; the carts were loaded with all the booty and provisions taken from the enemy. Near the carts, beneath the carts, and at a great distance from the carts, might be seen Zaporoghians sleeping on the grass in different picturesque attitudes; one had laid his head on a corn sack, another on his cap, a third had simply chosen the ribs of his comrade for his pillow. Almost every one wore, suspended to his belt, a sabre, a matchlock and a short pipe with brass plates, wires for cleaning it, and a steel for kindling fire. The massive bullocks were reclining with their feet under their bodies; and the great white spots which they formed looked at a distance like so many grey stones thrown about the acclivities of the field. From every spot in the grass the noisy snoring of the sleeping army had begun to rise, and it was answered from the field by the sonorous neighing of the horses, indignant at having their feet tied.

A magnificent and terrific sight was now added to the beauty of the summer night. It was the blaze of the conflagration of the neighbouring country. At one place the flames went slowly and majestically along the sky; at another, meeting with something combustible in their progress, they whirled suddenly round, hissed and flew up to the very stars, and their fiery tongues disappeared in the most distant clouds. Here a burnt cloister, blackened by the fire, stood like a hard-featured Carthusian monk, showing its stern gloomy outlines at every blaze; next to it a garden was burning. It seemed as if one might hear how the trees hissed wrapt in smoke; and as the fire happened to catch some new place its phosphoric violet light shone suddenly on the ripe bunches of plums, or threw a brilliant golden hue on the yellow pears; and in the midst of all this was to be seen, dangling from the wall of the building or from the bough of a tree, the corpse of some poor Jew or monk, doomed, like the building itself, to become the prey of the flames. Over the conflagration, hovering far away, were to be seen birds looking like so many dark diminutive crosses on a fiery field. The city seemed to be slumbering; its spires, its roofs, its palisades and its walls were sometimes illuminated by the reflection of the distant conflagration.

Andrew walked round the Cossacks' encampment. The bonfires at which the sentries were sitting were going out, and the sentries had fallen asleep; having, it would seem, too much indulged their Cossack appetites. Andrew marvelled at such carelessness, and thought it lucky that no strong forces of the enemy were at hand, and that there was nothing to fear. At last, he went to one of the carts, climbed into it and lay down on his back, bending his arms backwards and putting them under his head. He could not yet sleep, and remained a long time looking at the sky. It appeared all open to him; the air was pure and transparent; the compact mass of stars forming the milky way seemed to be all overflowing with light. At times, Andrew felt a sort of oblivion, and slumber, like a light fog, hid for a minute the sky from his sight; but the next moment it cleared away, and again he saw the heavens.

At this time, it seemed to him that a strange human face had passed before him. Thinking that it was nothing but an illusion of sleep, which would disappear, he opened his eyes wider, and saw that really an emaciated dried-up face bent over him and looked straight into his eyes. Long and coal-black locks of hair, uncombed and dishevelled, stole from beneath a veil thrown over the head. The strange brightness of the eyes, and the deathlike swarthiness of the strongly marked features, would almost

have led to the supposition that it was a phantom. Andrew convulsively seized a matchlock and exclaimed, "Who art thou? If thou be an evil spirit—disappear; if thou be a human creature, thy joke is out of place. I'll kill thee at once!"

The figure answered only by putting its finger to its lips, and seemed to be imploring silence. Andrew let go his hold, and began to look attentively at it. The long hair, the neck, and brown half-naked bosom showed it to be a woman, but she was not a native of the country; her face was sunburnt, and bespoke suffering; her wide cheekbones stuck out over her shrunken cheeks; her narrow eyes were cut obliquely, with the outer corner raised. The more Andrew looked at her features, the more he found in them something which he knew. At last he could not refrain from asking, "Tell me, who art thou? It seems to me that I know thee, or have seen thee somewhere."

"Two years ago, in Kieff."

"Two years ago—in Kieff!" repeated Andrew, endeavouring to bring to mind all that his memory had retained of his collegian's life. He took once more an attentive survey of her, and suddenly exclaimed aloud, "Thou art the Tartar! the servant of that lady! of the voevoda's daughter!"

"Hush!" said the Tartar, imploringly, folding her hands, shuddering in all her frame, and at the same time turning her head to see that no one had been awakened by the shriek of Andrew.

"Tell me—tell me—why—wherefore art thou here?" said Andrew in a whisper almost choked, and interrupted at every moment by his internal agitation; "where is the lady? is she alive?"

"She is now in the town."

"In the town?" exclaimed he, again almost shrieking aloud, and he felt that all his blood rushed at once to his heart. "Why is she in the town?"

"Because the lord, her father, is there; it is now more than a year that he has been voevoda[26] in Doobno."

"Well—is she married? Speak! how strange thou art! Say—what is she now?"

"She has not eaten for two days."

"How is that?"

"For a long time not one of the citizens has had a piece of bread; it is long since they were all eating earth."

Andrew remained speechless.

"The lady saw thee among the Zaporoghians from the town wall. She said to me, 'Go, tell the knight that if he recollects me he will come to me; and if not, that he will give thee a morsel of bread for my old mother, for I cannot see my mother die before my eyes. Let me rather die first and she afterwards. Entreat him—embrace his knees and his feet. He, too, may have an old mother, for her sake he must give a bit of bread.'"

Many and different were the feelings that awakened and stirred in the young Cossack's breast.

"But how art thou here? How didst thou come?"

"By a subterranean passage."

"Is there any subterranean passage, then?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Thou wilt not betray me, knight?"

"No; I swear by the holy cross!"

"Behind the ravine, after crossing the rivulet, where there are some reeds growing."

"And it leads straight into the city?"

"Straight into the cloister of the city."

"Let us go! let us go directly!"

"But, in the name of Christ and of his holy mother, a loaf of bread?"

"Thou shalt have it. Stay here by this cart, or rather lie down in it; nobody will see thee—all are sleeping. I'll be back directly."

And he went to the waggons where the provisions of his kooren were kept. His heart beat high. All the past which had been hidden, stifled by his present Cossack life and by the hardships of warfare, rose once more to the surface, drowning in return all the present. Again he saw emerging before him, as if from the depths of some ocean cavern, the form of the glorious lady; again his memory brought back the recollection of her fine arms, of her eyes, of her smiling lips, of her thick dark chestnut hair (whose locks hung curling over her bosom), and of all those elastic limbs which so well harmonised with her maidenly figure. No; these recollections were never extinguished in his breast; they had, only for a time, given place to other mighty impressions. But often—often had they disturbed the young Cossack's slumber, and often did he long lie sleepless on his bed without knowing how to explain the cause of his sleeplessness.

He went on, and his heart beat higher and higher, and his young knees shook at the mere thought of seeing her again. When he reached the waggons he had entirely forgotten why he had come, and, raising his hand to his brow, remained some time trying to recollect what he had to do. At last he shuddered, and felt terror-stricken: the thought flashed across his mind that she might be dying from hunger. He rushed to one of the waggons, and took some great rye loaves under his arm; but then he thought that this food, which suits the unspoiled taste of the strong Zaporoghians, would be too coarse and unsuited to her tender person. He remembered that, the day before, the Koschevoï had scolded the cooks for taking the whole of the buckwheat flour to make salamata[27], when the quantity would have been quite sufficient for more than three days. Certain of finding enough salamata left in the coppers, Andrew took the travelling kettle of his father and went with it to the cook of his kooren, who was sleeping beside two enormous cauldrons, under which the ashes were not yet extinguished. Looking into the cauldrons, he was astonished to find both of them empty. It ought to have required more than human exertions to eat up all their contents; the more so as their kooren was not so numerous as the others. He peeped into the kettles of the other koorens—there was nowhere anything left. Involuntarily he recollected the saying that Zaporoghians are like children:—Is there but little food? they will eat it; is there much? they will still leave nothing. What was to be done? There was yet somewhere, he thought, in the waggons of his father's regiment a sack of white bread, which the Cossacks had found while pillaging the cloister kitchen. Andrew went straight to his father's waggon: the sack was not there! Ostap had taken it to rest his head upon, and, stretched on the ground, he made the whole field resound with his snoring. Andrew with one hand seized the sack and pulled it away with a jerk, so that Ostap's head fell on the ground, and he himself started up in his sleep, and sitting with his eyes shut, shouted, "Hold! hold! the devil of a Pole! catch his horse! catch it!"

"Be silent! or thou art a dead man," cried the terrified Andrew, raising the sack on his head. But Ostap did not proceed with his speech, for he was already asleep, and snored with such violence that his breath waved the grass on which he was tying.

Andrew looked warily round, to ascertain if the ravings of Ostap had awakened any of the Cossacks. In fact, a crown-tufted head was seen rising in the nearest kooren; but, after looking around, it soon dropped on the ground. After waiting some two or three minutes, Andrew departed with his sack; the Tartar woman was crouching in the waggon, hardly daring to breathe.

"Arise! let us begone! every one sleeps; do not be afraid! Canst thou take but one of these loaves, if I cannot carry them all?" Saying this, he lifted the sacks upon his back, drew another sack with millet from a cart on his way, took even in his hands those loaves which he had wished the Tartar to carry, and bending a little went boldly through the ranks of the sleeping Zaporoghians.

"Andrew!" said old Boolba, as Andrew was passing near him.

Andrew's heart sank within him; he stopped trembling, and slowly uttered, "What?"

"There is a lass with thee! I'll give thee a famous thrashing to-morrow! The lasses will bring thee to no good!" and thus saying he reclined his head upon his elbow, and began to scrutinize the veiled form of the Tartar.

Andrew stood riveted to the spot, without daring to lift his eyes upon his father; but at last he raised them and looked at old Boolba: he saw him already sleeping, with his head resting on the palm of his hand.

He made the sign of the cross. Fear quitted his heart still faster than it had overpowered it; and as he turned round to look at the Tartar, he saw her standing behind him like a dark granite statue all muffled in her veil, and the glare of the distant conflagration, brightening into a sudden flash, lighted only her eyes, dull as those of a corpse. He pulled her sleeve and both proceeded together, looking back at every step. Descending a declivity, they came at last to a ravine, at the bottom of winch there rolled heavily along a rivulet overgrown with sedge, whose banks were all uneven. The field on which the Zaporoghian encampment stood was now entirely hidden from them. At least, as Andrew looked back, he saw an eminence, as high as a man's head, which rose behind him; on it were waving some blades of grass, over which the moon rose in the sky in the shape of a curved sickle of bright red gold. A light wind, which blew from the steppe, foreboded the approach of dawn; but nowhere was to be heard the distant crowing of the cock, for neither in the town nor in the surrounding country had a cock for a long time been left. They passed the rivulet on a log thrown across it; beyond it rose the opposite shore, which seemed to be higher than that which they had left, and had a steep ascent. The wall was here lower: yet the spot seemed a sure stronghold, for behind it rose the cloister wall. The steep hill was covered with long grass, and in the narrow ravine between it and the rivulet grew reeds nearly as tall as a man; on the summit of the hill might be seen the remains of a palisade, which formerly enclosed a kitchen garden; before it grew the large leaves of the butter burr, from behind which stuck out the goosefoot, wild prickly plants, and the sunflower, which reared its top above them. Here the Tartar took off her shoes and went barefoot, carefully lifting her dress, for the place was marshy and covered with water. Making their way through the reeds, they stopped before a heap of brushwood, which formed a fascine; they removed it and found a sort of arch made of earth, whose opening was not wider than the opening of a fireplace. The Tartar, bending her head, went in first; then followed Andrew, stooping as much as he could, to be able to carry his sacks. They were soon quite in the dark.

VI.

Andrew could hardly move with his sacks in the dark and narrow subterranean passage, through which he closely followed the Tartar. "We shall soon see our way," said the guide; "we are near the place where I left my lamp." A ray of light soon stole over the dark earthen wall. They reached a small

square, which seemed to have been a chapel; at least a narrow table, like an altar, stood against the wall, and over it hung a Latin image of the Madonna, the painting of which had faded away and could hardly be traced. A email silver lamp, which hung before it, threw over it an uncertain light. The Tartar bent down and took up from the floor a brass candlestick, on a high thin foot, with snuffers, a nail for trimming the wick, and an extinguisher hung round it on chains. Taking up the candlestick, she lighted the candle at the lamp. The light grew brighter and they proceeded, lighted at one time by a blaze of the candle, at others enshrouded in a coal-black shadow, like the figures to be seen in the paintings of Girardo della Nette. The robust, fine features of Andrew, beaming with health and youth, offered a strong contrast to the emaciated pallid face of his companion. The passage had grown wider, so that Andrew could now hold himself erect. He looked with curiosity at the earthen walls. As in those of Kieff,[28] there were excavations, and coffins stood in them from distance to distance; at some places, even human bones were to be met with, grown soft by the dampness of the air and mouldered into powder. Here, too, seemed to have lived holy men, who had sought a refuge from the tempests of the world, from pain and temptation. At times the dampness was very perceptible, and sometimes they even had their feet in water. Andrew was often obliged to stop to give rest to his companion, whose lassitude immediately returned. A little morsel of bread which she had swallowed only caused pain to her stomach, which had become unaccustomed to food, and she often remained motionless for some minutes. At last they saw before them a small iron door. "Thanks be to Heaven! we are there!" said the Tartar in a fainting voice; she tried to raise her hand to knock and had not the strength to do it. Andrew, in her stead, gave a heavy blow on the door; it resounded with a rumbling noise, which indicated that there was a wide empty space behind the door, the sound changing its tones as if met by high arches. At length the door was opened; they were admitted by a monk, who stood on a narrow staircase with the key and a light in his hand. Andrew involuntarily stopped at the sight of a Latin monk, whose garb aroused the most bitter feelings of hatred and contempt in the Cossacks, who behaved towards them with still greater cruelty than towards the Jews. The monk also drew back a step at seeing a Zaporoghian Cossack. But a word indistinctly muttered by the Tartar quieted his fear. He shut the door after them, lighted them up the staircase, and they found themselves under the dark vaulted roof of the cloister church.

At one of the altars, decked with tapers in high candlesticks, knelt a priest in the attitude of prayer; on either side of him, also kneeling, were two young choristers, clad in violet mantles, with white lace capes, holding censers in their hands. The priest was imploring a miracle from Heaven: he prayed that God would preserve the city, strengthen the failing courage, send down patience and resignation to the hearts of the timid and pusillanimous, to support them under the misery He had sent. Some women, like so many phantoms, were on their knees, reclining and even drooping their heads on the backs of the stools and of the dark wooden benches before them. Some men, leaning against the columns which sustained the side arches, mournfully knelt also. A window with coloured glass, which was over the altar, was now lighted by the pink hue of morning, and from it fell, down upon the floor, blue, yellow, and variegated circles of light, which suddenly brightened the darkness of the church. The whole of the altar in its distant niche, seem drowned in light; the smoke of the incense hung in the air like a cloud beaming with all the hues of the rainbow. Andrew was fain to look from the dark corner where he was standing, on this remarkable phenomenon produced by light. At this moment the sublime pealing of the organ suddenly filled the whole of the church; it grew deeper and deeper, increased by degrees into the heavy rollings of thunder, and then, all at once, turning into a heavenly melody, sent up, higher and higher beneath the vaulted roof, its warbling notes, which recalled the delicate voices of maidens; then once more it changed into the deep bellow of thunder, and then it was silent; but the rollings of the thunder long after tremulously vibrated along the aisles, and Andrew with open mouth stood marvelling at the sublime music.

And now he felt somebody pull the skirt of his coat. "It is time," said the Tartar. They went across the

church without any one paying attention to them, and came out on the square which was in front of it. The dawn had long ago spread its rosy tint over the sky; everything showed that the sun was about to rise. There was nobody in the square; in the middle of it remained some tables, which showed that, not longer than perhaps a week before, there had here been a market of victuals. As pavements were not used in those times, the ground was nothing but dried mud. The square was surrounded by small stone and clay houses, one story high, with walls, in which might be seen from top to bottom, the wooden piles and pillars, across which projected the wooden beams: houses such as used to be built then, may till now be seen in some towns of Lithuania and Poland. Almost all of them were covered by disproportionately high roofs, pierced all over with numbers of dormer windows. On one side, almost next to the church, rising above the other buildings, was an edifice quite distinct from the others, which seemed to be the town-hall of the city, or some other public establishment. It was two stories high, and above it rose a two-arched belvidere, where stood a sentry; a large sun-dial was fixed in the roof. The square seemed dead; but Andrew thought he heard a faint moaning. Looking on the other side, he saw a group of two or three men, who were lying quite motionless on the ground. He looked more attentively, to see if they were asleep or dead, and at the same time his foot stumbled against something which lay in his way. It was the corpse of a woman, who seemed to have been a Jewess. Her figure bespoke her to have been still young, though the macerated disfigured outlines of her face did not show it. Her head was covered with a red silk handkerchief; a double row of pearls or beads adorned the coverings of her ears;[29] two or three curling locks fell from under them on her shrivelled neck, on which the tightly drawn veins showed like sinews. Beside her lay a child, whose hand convulsively grasped her lank breast and twisted it with his fingers, in vain anger at finding there no milk. The child had ceased weeping and crying, and the slow heaving of its chest alone showed that it was not yet dead or, at least, that its last breath was yet to be drawn. Andrew and his companion turned into a street, and were suddenly stopped by a frantic man, who, seeing the precious burthen of Andrew, flew at him like a tiger and grasped him in his arms, shrieking aloud for bread; but his strength was not equal to his frenzy. Andrew shook off his grasp, and he fell on the ground. Moved by compassion, he threw him a loaf; the other darted like a mad dog upon it, gnawed and bit it, and, at the same moment and on the very spot, died in horrible convulsions from long disuse of taking food. Almost at every step they were shocked by the sight of hideous victims of hunger. It seemed that many could not endure their sufferings in their houses, and had run out into the streets, as if in hope to find something strengthening in the open air. At the doorway of a house sat an old woman, and one could not tell whether she were dead, asleep, or swooning; at least, she neither heard nor saw anything, but, with her head bent down over her chest, sat motionless on the same spot. From the roof of another house there was hanging from a rope a stretched and dried corpse. The miserable man had not been able to endure to the last the sufferings of hunger, and had chosen rather to quicken his end by voluntary suicide.

At seeing such horrifying evidences of the famine, Andrew could not refrain from asking the Tartar, "Had they, indeed, found nothing to lengthen their lives? When man comes to the last extremity, when nothing more remains, well, then he must feed upon what, till then, had appeared disgusting to him; he may even feed upon animals forbidden by the law—everything is then to be used for food."

"All is eaten up," answered the Tartar; "thou wilt not find a horse, a dog—no, not even a mouse left in the town. We never kept any provisions in town; everything was brought from the country."

"How, then, dying such fearful deaths, can they think of defending the town?"

"May be the voevoda would have surrendered it; but yesterday the colonel who garrisons Boodjiang sent a hawk into the town with a note saying not to surrender, as he is coming with his regiment to relieve it, and is only waiting for another colonel that they may come together. Now, we are expecting them every minute—but here we have reached the house."

Andrew had already noticed from a distance a house unlike the others, and which seemed to have been

built by an Italian architect; it was two stories high and constructed of fine thin bricks. The windows of the lower story were encompassed in lofty granite projections; the whole of the upper story consisted of arches, which formed a gallery; between the arches were to be seen gratings with armorial bearings; the corners of the house were also adorned with coats of arms. An external wide staircase, built with painted bricks, came down to the very square. Beneath the staircase were sitting two sentries, who picturesquely and symmetrically held with one hand a halberd, and leaned their heads on the other, more like statues than living beings. They neither slept nor slumbered, but seemed to have lost all feeling; they did not even pay any attention to those who went upstairs. At the top of the staircase Andrew and the Tartar found a soldier, clad from head to foot in a rich dress, who held a prayer-book in his hand. He raised his heavy eyes on them; but the Tartar whispered a word to him and he dropped them again on the open pages of his prayer-book. They entered the first room, which was tolerably spacious and seemed to be the hall for the reception of petitioners, or, perhaps, simply the ante-room; it was crowded with soldiers, servants, huntsmen, cup-bearers, and other officials whose presence was necessary to denote the rank of a high nobleman, and who were sitting in different postures along the walls. There was the smell of a candle which had burned down in its socket, and, although the morning light had long since peeped in at the railed windows, two more candles were burning in enormous candelabras almost the size of a man.

Andrew was already in the act of going towards a wide oaken door, adorned with a coat of arms and much carved work, when the Tartar pulled him by the sleeve and showed him a small door in the lateral wall. This door admitted them into a passage through which they passed into a room, which Andrew began to examine with attention. The daylight, coming through a hole in the window-shutter, fell upon a crimson drapery, upon a gilded cornice, and upon the wall covered with pictures. The Tartar made a sign to him to remain here, and went into an adjoining room from which came a ray of candlelight. He heard a whisper and a subdued voice which made him shudder. Through the door which now opened he caught a glimpse of a finely-shaped female figure with long luxuriant hair, which fell upon an uplifted arm. The Tartar returned and bade him enter. He could not account for how he entered or how the door closed behind him.

Two candles burned in the room, a lamp was lighted before an image, under which stood a high-backed chair (like those used by Papists), with steps for kneeling during prayer. But this was not what his eyes were in search of. He turned to another side, and saw a woman who seemed to have been suddenly petrified whilst in some rapid motion. All her figure appeared to betoken that she had been throwing herself forward towards him and had then suddenly stopped. He, too, stopped astonished; he could not have expected to meet her such as she now was; she was no longer the girl he had formerly known. Nothing remained of what she was before; but still she was twice as beautiful and handsome as she had been then. Then, there was something unfinished, something to be completed in her; now, she was like a picture to which the painter had given the last stroke of his brush. Then, she was a pretty giddy girl; now, she was a beauty, a woman who had attained the utmost development of her loveliness. Every feeling of her being was now expressed in her uplifted eyes—not one particular feeling or another—but all her feelings at once. Tears had not yet dried in her eyes, but covered them with a glittering moisture which it made the heart ache to behold. Her bust, her neck, and her shoulders now filled those splendid limits which are the dowry of a perfect beauty; her hair, which formerly curled in light ringlets round her face, now formed a thick luxuriant plait, part of which remained plaited, while the remainder hung down the whole length of her arm and fell over her bosom in long, thin, beautifully waving locks. Every outline of her features seemed to have undergone a change. Andrew tried in vain to find some of those which were pressing on his recollection; not one was to be found. Notwithstanding the extreme pallor of her face, her beauty was not lessened by it; but, on the contrary, seemed to gain something intrepid, and unconquerably victorious from it. Andrew felt his heart overflow with the tremor of adoration, and stood motionless before her. She seemed also to be

astonished at the appearance of the Cossack, who stood before her in all the beauty and vigour of youthful manhood; even motionless, as they were, his limbs betrayed the freedom and elasticity of their action; his eyes shone with firmness; his velvet eyebrows made a bold curve; his sunburnt cheeks were covered with the brightness of fiery youth, and his young black mustachios had the gloss of silk.

"No, I cannot, by any means, thank thee enough, generous knight," said she, and her silvery voice seemed to waver. "God in Heaven alone can repay thee! Not I, a weak woman!"

She cast her eyes down, hiding them beneath beautiful, snowy, semicircular eyelids, fringed with long arrow-like eyelashes; she bent her lovely face, and a fine rosy hue spread over it. Andrew knew not what to answer; he wished to tell her at once all that he had in his heart, to tell it as warmly as he felt it —but he could not. Something stopped his lips; even his voice failed him; he felt that he could not answer her words —he who had been brought up in the college and in migratory warfare; and he cursed his being a Cossack!

At this moment the Tartar came into the room. She had already cut the loaf brought by Andrew into slices, which she brought on a golden dish and set before her mistress. The lovely girl looked at her, at the bread, and lifted her eyes on Andrew: and much did those eyes express! That affecting look, which betrayed her sufferings and the impossibility of telling all the feelings which filled her bosom, was more easily understood by Andrew than any speech. He felt his heart lightened at once; he seemed to have at once lost all confusion, the motions and feelings of his soul which had till then appeared held in subjection by some heavy hand, now seemed to be set free, and uncontrollable streams of words ready to flow forth. But the young beauty turned abruptly towards the Tartar, and hastily asked, "And my mother? hast thou taken it to her?"

"She is asleep."

"And to my father?"

"I have; he said that he would come himself to thank the knight."

She took a piece of bread and raised it to her lips. Andrew looked at her with inexpressible delight as she broke it with her white fingers and began eating; but suddenly he remembered the man, driven to frenzy by hunger, who died before his eyes from swallowing a morsel of bread. He turned pale, and seizing her hand, shrieked, "Enough! eat no more! Thou hast not eaten for so long a time, bread may bring death to thee!" She let her hand fall directly, put the bread upon the dish and, like an obedient child, looked into his eyes. And could any words describe -but no; neither chisel, nor brush, nor even the loftiest and most powerful language can express what may sometimes be seen in the eyes of a maiden, or the delightful sensation of him who looks into such eyes.

"Queen!" cried Andrew, overwhelmed by his feelings; "what dost thou want? what dost thou wish? order me to it! Set me the task—the most impossible that ever was in the world. I will fly to accomplish it! Tell me to do what no man can do—I will do it! I will perish myself! Yes, that I will! And to perish for thee—I swear by the holy cross—will be sweet to me. No—but I shall never be able to say it—I have three farms, half of my father's horses are mine; all the dowry of my mother; all that she has kept hidden even from him—all is mine! None of our Cossacks has now such arms as I have; for the hilt alone of my sabre they will give me the best herd of horses and three thousand sheep. All this I will renounce: I will throw it away: I will burn it: drown it if thou sayest but a word; nay, if thou only movest thy fine dark eyebrow! I know that my speech is foolish, that it is out of time, out of place; that I, who was brought up in the college and in the Ssiecha, shall never be able to speak like kings, like princes and like the best man among the noble knights. I see that thou art another creature of God unlike us, and that far below thee are all other noble maidens!"

With increasing astonishment, all ears, but not understanding a single word, did the maiden listen to the

frank hearty speech which, like a mirror, reflected the young powerful soul, every word of which, spoken in a voice bounding straight from the bottom of the heart, was invested with power. She bent her beautiful face forward, threw over her back the troublesome locks, opened her lips, and remained looking at him a long time, then was about to speak; but she suddenly stopped, and recollected that another path had to be followed by the knight; that behind him stood his father and his kin, like so many harsh avengers; that terrible were the Zaporoghians who were besieging the city, every inhabitant of which was doomed to a cruel death —then suddenly her eyes filled with tears. She took her silk-embroidered handkerchief, threw it over her face, and in an instant it was moistened all over; and she remained a long time sitting with her beautiful head thrown back, with her pretty underlip compressed, as if she had felt the bite of some venomous reptile; and she kept her handkerchief over her face, so that he should not behold her overwhelming grief.

"Say but one word to me!" said Andrew, and he took hold of her satin-like arm. The touch made fire run through his veins, and he pressed her hand which lay insensible in his.

But she was silent; did not withdraw her handkerchief from her face, and remained motionless.

"Why art thou so sorrowful? tell me, why art thou so sorrowful?"

She flung away her handkerchief, threw back the locks which fell over her eyes and gave way to a burst of plaintive words, uttering them in a low voice. Thus, rising on a beautiful evening, does the breeze run through the dense stems of the water-weeds, and soft plaintive tones quiver, thrill, and melt away in the air, and the passing traveller, in unaccountable sadness, pauses without noticing either the evening which is fading away, or the gay songs of the people returning from the fields and their harvest labours.

"Do not I, then, deserve everlasting pity? Is not the mother who brought me into the world, unhappy? Is not the lot which has fallen to me sad? Art thou not merciless, my cruel fate? All men hast thou brought to my feet, the greatest of our nobility, the wealthiest lords, counts and foreign barons, and the very flower of our knighthood! All these sought my hand, and as a great boon, would any one of them have received my love. I had but to wave my hand, and the choicest of them all, the handsomest in person and the best in lineage, would have been my husband! But for none of them hast thou warmed my heart, merciless fate! in spite of the most accomplished knights of my country, thou hast given it to a foreigner, to one of our foes! Why, most holy Mother of God, for what sins of mine, for what heavy crimes dost thou subject me to such relentless, to such unsparing persecutions? My life was passed amidst affluence and luxury; the costliest viands, the richest wines were my food and my drink; and for what? to what result has it brought me? Is it, that I must die the most cruel death which even the poorest beggar in the kingdom is spared? Alas! it is not enough for me to be doomed to this most horrible fate; to see, before my end, how my father and my mother will die in insupportable sufferings —they, for whose welfare I would readily give up twenty times my own life—all this is not enough, but I must previously to my death hear words and see love such as I have never heard or seen before; my heart must be torn to pieces by his speech: that my bitter fate may be still bitterer to me: that I may regret still more my young life: that death may appear to me still more frightful: and that I may before dying still utter more reproaches to thee, my cruel fate, and thee (forgive my sin) most holy Mother of God!"

As she ceased speaking, an expression of hopelessness, of the most utter despair, spread over her features; every outline of them betokened sadness, and the brow bent down in sorrow, the downcast cast eyes, the tears which had remained and dried on her glowing cheeks, all appeared to tell that no happiness was there!

"Such a thing was never heard of: it cannot be: it shall not be," exclaimed Andrew, "that the loveliest and best of women should be doomed to so bitter a lot, when she was born to see all that is best in the world worship her like a goddess. No—thou shalt not die; it is not thy lot to die; I swear, by my birth

and by all that I love in the world, thou shalt not die! And if it should happen, if nothing, neither strength, nor prayer, nor courage can avert the dreadful fate, we will die together, and I will die first; I will die beneath thine eyes, at thy dear feet, and only when dead will I part with thee!"

"Do not deceive me and thyself, knight!" answered she, slowly shaking her fine head; "I know, and to my greatest sorrow do I know but too well, that thou canst not love me; I know, what thy duty, what thy covenant is: thy father, thy comrades, thy country call thee—and we are thy foes!"

"And what to me, are father, comrades, country?" said Andrew, tossing his head, and drawing up his stature to his full height, straight as the black poplar growing on the banks of a river: "if so—not one of them will I know! not one! not one!" repeated he with that voice, and peculiar motion of the hand, with which the mighty dauntless Cossack expresses his decision about something unheard of, and impossible for any one but himself. "Who has told me that Ukraine is my country? Who gave it to me for my country? Our native country is that for which our soul longs, which is dear to us above all other tilings! My native country—thou art it! This is my country! And I will carry this country in my heart as long as I live, and I shall see who of all the Cossacks will ever tear it thence! And all that I have, will I sell, resign, destroy, for this, my native country!"

At first she remained stupified and motionless, and, like a fine statue, gazed into his eyes; then, on a sudden, bursting into tears, she flung herself on his neck, caught him in her snow-white delicate arms, and sobbed aloud; all this she did with that marvellous womanly impetuosity, of which none is capable but inconsiderate generous woman, created for magnanimous impulses of the heart. At this moment, confused shouts, together with the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums were heard in the street. But Andrew heard them not, he only felt how her pretty lips diffused over his face the aromatic warmth of their breath, how her tears flowed in streams over his cheeks, and how, falling down from her head, her fragrant hair wrapped him in its dark and glossy silk.

At the same moment the Tartar ran into the room with the joyful exclamation, "Rescued! rescued!" cried she, beside herself with joy: "our own have come into the town; they have brought with them, bread, millet, flour, and Zaporoghian prisoners!" But neither of the two understood who "our own" were who had come into the town, what they had brought, or what they had to do with the Zaporoghians. Full of feelings not to be enjoyed on earth, Andrew impressed a kiss on her fragrant lips; they returned the kiss, and in that mutual, melting embrace each of them felt all that man can feel but once in his lifetime.

Then lost was the Cossack for ever! lost to all Cossack knighthood! Never again will he see the Ssiecha: the farms of his father: the church of God. Ukraine will never again see the bravest of her children who went forth for its defence. Old Tarass will tear from his head a lock of his grey hair, and curse the day and the hour when such a son was born to bring shame upon him!

VII.

The whole of the Zaporoghian camp was in an uproar. At first nobody could ascertain how it had come to pass that the Polish reinforcement had entered the city. It was afterwards found out that all the Cossacks of the kooren of Percaslavl, encamped before one of the side gates of the city, were dead drunk; so no wonder if half of them were killed, and the remainder bound and made prisoners, before any one could discover what was the matter. While the other koorens, awakened by the noise, had but time to snatch up their arms, the Poles had already made their way through the gate, and their rear-ranks alone fired on the Zaporoghians who, not yet wholly recovered from their slumbers and their tipsiness, had in disorder rushed upon them. The Koschevoï gave the order for all to assemble, and when all stood in a circle and kept silence, their caps off, he spoke thus:—

"Do you see, gentlemen brothers, what has happened this night? You see now the result of drunkenness? You see the shame that the foe has brought upon us? It seems to be part of your habits, that, if your allowance is doubled, you think yourselves entitled to go on drinking till you bring yourselves into such a state that the foe of Christian soldiers may not only pull off your trowsers, but even spit in your face before you are aware of it!"

The Cossacks stood with their heads bent down, as if to acknowledge their fault. The ataman of the kooreen of Neezamaitzy, Kookoobenko, alone retorted. "Stop, father," said he, "although it is not according to the rules that one should reply when the Koschevoï is speaking before the army, yet as the matter was not thus, I must say so. Thou art not quite right in thy reproach. The Cossacks would have been in fault, and would have deserved death if they had got drunk on march, on the field of battle, or during some hard or difficult labour; but we remained without any business at all, sauntering round the city. No fast, nor any other Christian penance was at hand; how, then, could it be expected that a man should not get drunk when he had nothing to do? There is no sin in that. Let us rather show now what it is to fall upon innocent men. We have till now struck hard—let us now strike so that they may not even be able to take to their heels to fly back to their homes!"

The speech of the koorennoï ataman greatly pleased the Cossacks. They raised their eyes which had, till then, remained bent down, and many of them approvingly tossed their heads, saying, "Well said, Kookoobenko!" Tarass Boolba, who was standing not far from the Koschevo, said, "How now, Koschevoï? Kookoobenko seems to be right; what wilt thou say-now?"

"What will I say? I will say that happy is the father that has brought such a son. It is no difficult matter to find upbraiding words, but it is a difficult matter to speak such words as, aggravating a man's misfortunes by reproach, may coax him and stir up his fallen spirit as spurs incite the spirit of a steed refreshed by drink. I had, myself, the intention of adding some encouraging words; but Kookoobenko has outstripped me."

"Well, also, has the Koschevoï spoken!" was heard in the ranks of the Zaporoghians. "Well spoken!" repeated others; and even the oldest, those with ash-coloured locks, nodded their heads, and twirling their mustachios, said, "Well spoken!"

"Now, hear me, gentlemen!" continued the Koschevoï; "it is neither proper for a Cossack, nor is it his business to take fortresses as German mercenaries do (may the fiend seize them!), climbing the walls and digging the ground. But, after all, what may be guessed is, that the enemy entered the town with no great store of provisions; there were not many waggons with them, the people in the fortress are starving, so all will be eaten up in no time; as for the horses —I do not know, unless some of their saints throw them hay from heaven; but this seems not highly probable, the more so, as their parsons are men of mere words. So, happen what will, not one of them must ever come out of the town. Divide yourselves into three parties, and take the three roads which lead to the three gates. Five koorens must take the high road before the main gate; before each of the others three koorens must stand. The

Diadnivsky and the Korsoonsky koorens must lie in ambush. Colonel Tarass, with his regiment, must lie in ambush, also! The Tytarevskoï and the Toonnoshevsko? koorens in reserve, on the right flank of the baggage! The Stcherbinovskoï and the Upper Steblikovskoï on its left flank. Now, come forward those who are clever at teasing, and tease the enemy! Poles are empty-headed people and cannot bear jeering, and may be, even to-day, they will sally forth out of the gates. Let the atamans pass each kooren in review: those that have not their full complement must be filled up with the Cossacks remaining from the Percaslavskoï kooren. Then, review them once more I Let every Cossack have a loaf and a dram of brandy, to drive away the tipsiness out of his head. But, surely, every one got enough yesterday; for, to say the truth, you all had so much drink that I wonder nobody burst asunder in the night. One order more:—If any Jew, brandy-shop keeper, or any one else sell, were it but a single dram of brandy to a Cossack, I'll have a hog's ear nailed to his face, and I'll have him, the cursed dog, hung with his head downwards! Well, now to business, brothers!"

Thus ordered the Koschevoï, and all bowed to him, and with uncovered heads went to their waggons and to their camps, and only when they were at a distance did they put on their caps. They all made preparations; every one tried his sabre or his broadsword, poured powder from the bags into powder-horns, removed and placed the carts, and selected the horses.

On his way to his regiment Tarass thought, but could not imagine, what had happened to Andrew. Had he been made prisoner with the others, and had he been bound during his sleep?—but no, it could not be; Andrew was not the man to be made prisoner whilst alive. He was not, moreover, to be found among the slain Cossacks. Tarass was lost in thought, and went before his regiment without noticing that somebody had been for a long time calling him by his name. "Who wants me?" said he, at last recovering from his reverie. Yankel, the Jew, was standing before him.

"My lord colonel! My lord colonel!" said the Jew in a hasty and choked voice, as if he had some matter of no small importance to impart to him. "I have been in the town, my lord colonel!"

Tarass looked at the Jew, marvelling how he could have managed to find time already to go into the town. "And what devil took thee there?"

"I will tell you directly," said Yankel. "As soon as I heard the noise in the morning, and heard the Cossacks fire their guns, I caught up my coat and, without waiting to put it on, ran with all speed to the spot; by the way only I slipped on the sleeves, for I was in a hurry to know what the noise was, and why the Cossacks fired their guns so early in the morning. I got to the town gate just as the last of the troops entered the town. And, behold! before the soldiers, I saw the Ensign Galiandovitch. He is an acquaintance of mine; he has owed me, for more than two years now, a hundred ducats; so I came to him as if for the purpose of settling our accounts, and I went with him into the town."

"How so? thou wentest into the town, and still more, for the purpose of settling accounts!" said Boolba, "and he did not have thee hanged like a dog?"

"By Heavens, he wished to have me hanged," answered the Jew; "his servants had already got hold of me and thrown a rope round my neck; but I implored him to have mercy, said that I would wait for the debt as long as he might choose, and even promised to lend him more money as soon as he helps me to have my accounts settled with the other knights. Because that gentleman ensign—I'll tell the whole truth to the lord colonel—has not a single ducat in his pocket, although he has farms, and manors, and castles, and plenty of pasture land; but as for coins, he has no more of them than a Cossack. Even now, had not the Jews of Breslau equipped him, he could not have gone to the war. That was the very reason of his not having been at the Ssiem."[30] "What didst thou, then, in the town; hast thou seen any of ours?"

"Of course I did; there are many of ours:— Itska, Rakhoom, Ssamuïlo, Khaïvalkh, the Jew-farmer"—

"Curses on them, unbelieving dogs!" shrieked Tarass, growing angry; "why art thou calling over to me thy Jewish stock! I ask thee about our Zaporoghians."

"I've not seen our Zaporoghians. I've only seen my lord Andrew."

"Thou hast seen Andrew?" cried Tarass; "what of him? where didst thou see him? in some dungeon? in some cave? dishonoured? fettered?"

"Who would ever dare to fetter my lord Andrew? he is now such a knight—by Heavens, I hardly recognised him! His coat all over gold, his belt all gold—yes, all over gold and everywhere gold; just like the sun, as it shines in spring when every bird is chirping and singing in the gardens, and every blade of grass is fragrant, thus is he all shining bright with gold; and the steed that the voevoda has given him, is the best riding horse one ever saw: the steed alone is worth two hundred ducats!"

Boolba was astounded. "Why did he put on this strange dress?"

"Because it was better than his own; that's why he put it on. And he is riding about, and others are riding about, and he is teaching others, and others are teaching him—just like the most important Polish lord."

"And who constrained him to do this?"

"I am not saying that anybody put any constraint on him. Does not your lordship know, then, that he went over to them of his own free will?"

"Who went over?"

"My lord Andrew."

"To whom is he gone over?"

"To the other side; he is now quite theirs."

"Thou liest, hog!"

"How can it be that I should lie? Am I a fool to lie? Will I lie at the risk of my own head? Do I not know that if a Jew happen to lie to a lord, he will be hanged like a dog?"

"So thou sayest that he has sold his native country and his faith?"

"I did not say that he had sold anything; I am only saying that he has passed over to the other side."

"Thou liest, cursed Jew! such a thing never happened in a Christian land! Thou mockest me, cursed dog!"

"May grass grow on the threshold of my house if I lie! May every one spit on the tomb of my father, on that of my mother, on those of my father-in-law, of the father of my father, of the father of my mother, if I lie! If your lordship wishes, I'll even say why he went over to them."

"Why, then?"

"The voevoda's daughter is a beauty. Heavens! what a beauty!" and the Jew endeavoured as well as he could to express her beauty in his face, stretching his hands asunder, twinkling one of his eyes, and writhing his mouth on one side, as if he had tasted something good.

"Well, then, what of that?"

"That is the reason of all his doings and of his passing over. Because if a man becomes enamoured he is just like the sole of a boot, which, if it becomes once soaked in water, may be stretched and bent as much as one wishes."

Boolba fell into a deep reverie. He remembered that such is the power of a weak woman that many mighty men perish by it, that Andrew was very vulnerable on that point—and long did he remain as if riveted to the same spot.

"Hear me, your lordship, I'll tell your lordship all," proceeded the Jew; "just as I heard the noise and saw the troops entering the town gate, I caught up, at all events, a string of pearls, because in the town there are many beauties and noble ladies; and wherever there are beauties and noble ladies, said I to myself, even if they have nothing to eat, they will nevertheless buy finery. And as soon as the servants of the ensign had let me go, I ran to the voevoda's courtyard to sell my pearls. I learned everything from a Tartar servant-maid: the marriage will take place as soon as the Zaporoghians are driven away. My lord Andrew has promised to drive the Zaporoghians away."

"And thou didst not kill him on the spot, the devil's son?" shrieked Boolba.

"Why should I have killed him? He went to the Poles of his own good will. What harm is there? He found himself better off there, so there he went."

"And didst thou see him in person?"

"By Heaven, I did! Such a fine warrior! The best of all. May Heaven grant health to him! He knew me in a moment, and as I passed near him he at once said to me"—

"What did he say?"

"He said—no, he first beckoned to me, and then afterwards said to me, 'Yankel!' and I said, 'My lord Andrew!' 'Yankel, tell my father, tell my brother, tell the Cossacks, tell the Zaporoghians, tell every one, that my father is no more a father to me, that my brother is no more my brother, my comrades no more my comrades; and that I will fight against them: against every one of them will I fight!'"

"Thou liest, Judas!" shrieked Tarass, beside himself with rage; "Thou liest, dog I Thou hast crucified Christ—man accursed by Heaven! I will kill thee, Satan! Away with thee, or thou art a dead man!" and with these words Tarass unsheathed his sabre. The Jew took to his heels, and ran with all the speed of his thin shrivelled legs, he ran a long time through the tents of the Cossacks, and then in the open field, before he ventured to look back; but Tarass thought not of pursuing him, after reflecting that his anger ought not to be wreaked upon the first who fell into his hands.

Now he remembered having, only last night, seen Andrew going about the encampment with a woman, and his gray head drooped; and yet he would not believe that such an odious event had taken place, and that his own son had betrayed his faith and his soul.

At last he conducted his regiment into ambush, and was soon out of sight with it, behind the only forest which had not been burned by the Cossacks. In the mean time the Zaporoghians, on foot and on horseback, occupied the three roads which led to the three gates. One kooren followed another; that of Perecaslav alone was missing. Deep had been the carousing of its Cossacks, and there carouse had sealed their doom. Some awoke in irons in the power of the enemy—some without awakening had passed to their eternal sleep, and their ataman, Khleeb, without trowsers or any other garment, had found himself in the Polish camp.

The movement of the Cossacks had attracted attention in the city. All its inhabitants rushed to the battlements, and a curious sight appeared before the Cossacks. The brass helmets shone like so many suns, adorned with snow-white feathers.[31] Some warriors wore light caps, pink or sky-blue, with the tops bent on one side.

Their coats, with sleeves falling behind the shoulders,[32]were either embroidered with gold or ornamented with lace. There were many swords and guns with costly handles, which had been dearly

paid for by their masters, and much more finery was to be seen there. In front of all stood, with a haughty demeanour and with a red cap ornamented with gold on his head, the newly-arrived colonel of Boodjang. Stout was the colonel, stouter and taller than all others, and his wide costly overcoat hardly met round his figure. On the other side, close to the side gate, stood another colonel, a diminutive man, who seemed to have been dried up; but his small piercing eyes looked briskly from under his thick eyebrows, and he turned about sharply on all sides, pointing with his thin dry hand, and giving orders; one might see that, notwithstanding his small size, he was well acquainted with warfare.At some distance from him stood a tall, very tall ensign, with thick mustachios; there was no lack of colour in his face; he was fond of strong mead and gay revelling. And many were the gentlemen to be seen behind these, who had taken arms either for the king's money, or on their own ducats, or on money borrowed from Jews, to whom they had pawned everything they could find in the castles of their grandfathers; many, also, who were mere hangers-on of senators (whom these latter kept to be able to boast of the number of their retinue at dinners), who stole silver cups from the tables and cupboards, and who, after having made a figure one day, sat the next on the coachbox of some lord. Many were the different persons assembled on the walls. Some of them had not a penny to drink with, and yet all had made themselves fine for fighting.Silently stood the ranks of the Cossacks before the walls. None of them wore any gold on their coats; only now and then some of it might be seen on the handles of their swords or of their guns. The Cossacks did not like to make themselves fine for fighting; their mail coats and dresses were plain, and stretching far away might be seen the black tops of their sheepskin caps.

Two Cossacks rode in front of the Zaporoghian ranks, one of them quite young, the other somewhat elderly; both biting in words, and not bad Cossacks in deeds also: Okhreim Nash and Nikita Golokopytenko. Close behind them rode Demid Popovich, a thorough Cossack, who for a long time had rambled about the Ssiecha, had been before Adrianople, and had had much to endure in his lifetime: he had been burned in fire, and had run back to the Ssiecha with his head covered with tar and blackened by the flames and his mustachios singed off.[33] But once more had Popovich regained his health, his crown-lock curled once more behind his ear, his mustachios had grown again, thick and black as pitch, and biting were his caustic speeches.

"The dresses of the army are fine enough, but I should like to know if the courage of the army is as fine?"

"I'll have you all tied up!" cried the stout colonel from the walls; "give up your guns and horses, ye boors! Have ye seen how I have bound your comrades? Let the Zaporoghian prisoners be brought upon the battlements!"

And the Zaporoghians, tied with ropes, were brought upon the walls; in front of all was to be seen the koorennoï ataman Khleeb, without trowsers or any other dress, in the same state as that in which he had been made prisoner in his sleep. And downwards he bent his head, ashamed of being seen naked by the Cossacks, and of having been made prisoner while sleeping, like a dog. In one night his strong head had turned gray.

"Cheer up, Khleeb! we'll set thee free!" cried the Cossacks from below.

"Cheer up, friend!" cried the koorennoï ataman Borodatyi: "no fault of thine if they took thee naked; misfortune may happen to any one; but shame be upon them that they make a show of thee without so much as hiding thy nakedness!"

"Ye seem to be brave warriors against sleeping men?" said Golokopytenko, looking towards the wall.

"Let us take our time, and we'll shave your crown-locks for you!" cried those from above.

"I should like to see you shave our crown-locks!" said Popovich, making curvets with his steed; then, looking at the Cossacks, he resumed: "After all, the Poles may be right; should the big-bellied one there

bring them out of the town, they would have a good defence!"

"And why dost thou think they would have a good defence?" said the Cossacks, guessing that Popovitch meant some fun.

"Simply, because behind his back the whole of the army might remain concealed, and no spear on earth could ever reach them across his belly."

The Cossacks roared with laughter, and many nodded their heads, saying, "Well! Popovich, when he chances to say something funny, why, then"—but they did not add what happened then.

"Away, quickly away from the walls;" cried the Koschevoï; for the Poles seemed not to relish such bitter fun, and the colonel had waved his hand. Hardly had the Cossacks rushed away, when a volley of grape-shot flew from the walls. Tumult arose on the battlements, the gray-haired voevoda himself made his appearance on horseback. The gate flew open, and the army issued forth. In front rode, in regular ranks, the hussars; after them came the chain-mailed regiment; behind these, the cuirassiers with spears; then those in brass helmets; and after all, apart from the rest, the éliteof the officers—each dressed according to his own fashion. They chose not, haughty gentlemen, to mix with the other ranks; and those who had no commission went alone with their servants. After them came soldiers again; then the standard-bearer; then, again, ranks of soldiers; then the stout colonel, and, behind them all, rode the diminutive colonel.

"Let them not take up their position! let them not set their troops in order!" cried the Koschevoï. "All koorens! up and at them! Leave the other gates! The Titarevskoï kooren attack one flank! The Diadkovskoï kooren attack the other. Kookoobenko and Palyvoda, push on the rear! Mix! confuse! and drive them asunder!"

And the Cossacks struck on every side; the Poles were driven asunder and mingled in confusion, and the Cossacks were mixed with them. Even firing was out of the question; swords and spears were alone useful.

The melée became general, and every one could show his personal skill. Demid Popovich had already speared two soldiers and thrown two officers from their steeds, saying, "Those are good horses; I have long wished to have such horses!" And he drove the horses a long way out into the field, calling to the Cossacks standing there to catch them. He again went into the crowd; once more attacked the officers thrown down; killed one of them, and throwing his arkan round the neck of the other,[34] tied it to his saddle and dragged him over the field, after possessing himself of his costly sword and the purse full of ducats, which hung at his belt.

Kobita, a good Cossack and a young one, too, fought with one of the bravest Polish warriors, and long was their fight. They were already hand to hand: the Cossack got the uppermost, and, after throwing down his adversary, plunged his sharp Turkish knife into his breast; but he took no heed of himself, and on the very spot a hot bullet struck him on the temple. He who killed him was one of the most notable among the lords; a handsome knight of ancient and princely descent. Slim as a poplar, he rode on his chestnut steed. Many were the noble knightly feats he had already accomplished; two Zaporoghians had he hewn in twain; Theodore Korj, a good Cossack, had he thrown on the dust with his horse; he shot the horse, and pierced the Cossack under it with his spear; many heads, many hands had he hewn down;he had killed the Cossack Kobita by sending a bullet through his temple.

"This is the man with whom I should wish to try my strength!" cried Kookoobenko, the ataman of the Nezamaikovskoï kooren; and spurring his horse, he rushed up close behind him and gave a fearful howl, which made all around shudder. The Pole tried to turn his horse round to confront his foe; but the horse would not turn: terrified by the fearful shriek, it dashed aside, and Kookoobenko fired his gun at the rider. The bullet entered his shoulder-blade, and down went the Pole on the ground; still, even then,

he yielded not, but tried to strike once more at his foe; but his weakened arm fell beneath the weight of his sabre, and Kookoobenko taking, with both his hands, his heavy sword, drove it right into the Pole's blanched mouth: the blade knocked out two white teeth, cut the tongue in two, ran through the throat, and went far into the ground, nailing the knight for ever to the dank earth. Like a fountain spirted forth the high-descended noble blood, red as the berries of the water elder, and dyed the yellow gold-embroidered jacket.

And Kookoobenko had already left him, and, along with the Cossacks of his kooren, cut his way into another crowd. "Eh! why did he leave on the ground such costly finery!" said Borodatyi, the Omanskoï ataman, riding from his kooren to the spot where lay the officer killed by Kookoobenko. "I have killed with my own hand seven officers, and have not yet seen such finery on any one." And giving way to cupidity, Borodatyi bent down in order to take possession of the costly arms; he had already seized a Turkish knife, with a handle set with precious stones: had untied from the belt a purse full of ducats: had taken from the neck a pouch of fine linen and costly silver, containing a girl's ringlet, which had been carefully kept as a souvenir; but he did not hear how, behind his back, there had rushed upon him the red-nosed ensign, who had already been thrown from his saddle by Borodatyi, and had received a good deep slash at his hands. The ensign lifted his sword, and struck it with all his might on the bended neck of Borodatyi. No good had come of cupidity! Away sprang the mighty head, and down fell the beheaded body, making a large pool of blood on the ground. Up to the skies flew the hard Cossack's soul, frowning and filled with indignation, and, at the same time, astonished at departing so quickly from so strong a body. Hardly had the ensign taken hold of the ataman's crown-lock, in order to tie it to his saddle, when a stern avenger was there.

As a goshawk, who seems to swim in the sky, and who, after having made many circles with his strong wings, suddenly remains stationary in the air, and then darts with arrow-like speed on some quail chirping by the highway side, so Ostap, the son of Tarass, suddenly darted on the ensign, and threw the arkan round his neck. Still redder grew the red face of the ensign, as the fatal knot tightened round his throat; he tried to use his pistol, but his cramped hand could not take aim, and the bullet flew harmlessly through the field. Ostap detached from the ensign's saddle a silken rope, which the latter kept for the purpose of tying his prisoners, and bound him hand and foot with his own rope, hooked its end to his saddle, and dragged him across the field, shouting to the Cossacks of the Omanskoï kooren to go and render the last honours to their ataman.

As soon as the Cossacks heard that their ataman Borodatyi was killed, they left the battle-field, rushed to take away his body, and began on the spot to deliberate as to whom they should choose for their ataman. At last they said, "What is the use of deliberating? no one would do better as a koorennoïataman than young Boolba, Ostap; true, he is the youngest among us, but he has as much sense as the oldest." Ostap, taking off his cap, thanked his brother Cossacks for the honour, did not refuse it, either on account of youth or of inexperience, knowing that it was of no use to do so now in battle time. Instead of this, he led them into the thickest of the fray, and showed them that he well deserved to be their ataman.

In the meanwhile, the Poles felt that the fight had grown too hot for them; they retired and ran across the field, in order to form their ranks at the other end of it. The diminutive colonel gave a signal to four fresh companies who stood near the gate, and grape-shot flew thence into the crowd of Cossacks; but the volley did but little mischief: it flew into the herd of the Cossacks' bullocks, who were stupidly gazing on the fight. The terrified bullocks roared, turned on the Cossack encampment, broke the waggons to pieces, and trampled some men under their feet. But Tarass, rushing at this moment from his ambuscade, with loud cries threw himself with his regiment across their way. The whole of the maddened herd of one accord turned round, and, dashing into the Polish regiments, threw confusion into the cavalry, mixed, crushed, and broke asunder the ranks.

"Thanks to ye, bullocks!" cried the Zaporoghians. "Campaign service have ye borne hitherto, and now war service have ye rendered also!" and with fresh strength they pressed on the enemy. Many were the foes who were slaughtered there. Many were those who distinguished themselves —Metelitza, Shilo, Pissarenkos, Vovtoozenko, and many more. The Poles saw that no good could come of it; the ensign was hoisted, and the signal was given to open the gate. Creaking went the iron-nailed gate, and in went the exhausted and dust-covered riders, like sheep into the sheep-fold. Many of the Zaporoghians wished to pursue them; but Ostap detained his Cossacks, saying, "Farther, farther away, brothers, from the walls! it is not well to draw too near them." And he was right; for a volley of grape-shot came from the walls, and did much mischief. At this moment the Koschevoï rode up to Ostap, and praised him, saying, "Though thou art but a new ataman, yet thou leadest thy Cossacks like an old one!" And old Tarass turned round to see who the new ataman was, and beheld his Ostap in front of the Omansko? kooren, his cap stuck on one side and the ataman's mace in his hand. "There, just look at that one!" said he, gazing at him; and joyful felt old Boolba, and began to thank the Cossacks for the honour bestowed on his son.

The Cossacks retired, preparing to return to their encampment, when the Poles reappeared on the walls; but their dresses were now torn to pieces, many costly coats were besmeared with gore, and dust covered the fine brass helmets.

"Did you tie us with your ropes?" cried the Zaporoghians from below.

"Take heed!" cried from above the stout colonel, showing a rope; and still the dust-covered exhausted warriors continued to abuse one another, and on both sides the hot-headed exchanged scolding words.

At last all withdrew. Some, tired by the fight, retired to rest; some applied earth to their wounds, and tore into bandages kerchiefs and costly dresses, taken from the slain enemies. Those who were less tired went to remove the corpses of their dead comrades, and to render the last duty to them. Graves were dug with sabres and spears, the earth was carried away in caps and in the skirts of coats; then the corpses of the Cossacks were reverently laid in the ground and covered with fresh earth, so that the carrion ravens and eagles might not tear out their eyes. And the corpses of the Poles, several together, as they came to hand, were tied to the tails of wild horses and sent to be dragged over the plain, and for a long time after were the horses lashed on the sides and driven about. The maddened animals flew across furrows and hillocks, ditches and rivulets, and the Polish corpses, covered with gore and dust, were kicked about the ground.

As the evening came on, the Cossacks assembled in circles, and sat for a long time talking about the feats which it had fallen to every one to perform, feats to be told for ever to new-comers and to posterity. Long did they remain before going to sleep; but longer than all, old Tarass lay awake, thinking all the time what it could mean that Andrew had not been among the enemy's warriors. Had the Judas scrupled to fight against his countrymen? or, had the Jew belied him, and had he simply been made prisoner? But then he remembered that Andrew's heart was not proof against woman's words. Tarass felt a deep pang in his heart, and vowed vengeance against the Polish girl, who had bewitched his son. And assuredly he would have fulfilled his vow; he would have taken no heed of her beauty; he would have trailed her by her thick luxuriant hair;he would have dragged her across the whole field, amidst all the Cossacks; he would have kicked on the ground, covered with gore and blackened with dust, her beautiful bosom and shoulders, white as the eternal snows that lie on the crests of mountains; he would have torn her fine graceful form into fragments. But Boolba knew not what God reserved for the morrow, and falling into forgetfulness, he at last went to sleep. In the mean time, the Cossacks continued talking among themselves, and all night long, close to the fires, stood the sober vigilant sentinels, carefully looking on every side.he would have torn her fine graceful form into fragments. But Boolba knew not what God reserved for the morrow, and falling into forgetfulness, he at last went to sleep. In the mean time, the Cossacks continued talking among themselves, and all night long, close to

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VIII.

The sun was not yet high in the heavens when all the Zaporoghians assembled in a crowd. News had come from the Ssiecha, that the Tartars, during the absence of the Cossacks, had pillaged it, and dug up the treasures which the Cossacks kept concealed underground, had killed or made prisoners all those who were left behind, and had directed their course straight to Perekop, with all the herds of cattle and horses which they had taken. One Cossack only, Maxim Gotodookha, had escaped on the way, from the hands of the Tartars, had killed one of their Mirzas,[35]had taken away his purse of sequins, and had, on a Tartar horse, in a Tartar dress, for one day and a half and two nights, fled from their hue and cry; had ridden his horse to death, had taken a second, which sank also under hard riding, and had only on the third found his way to the Zaporoghian encampment, which, he ascertained on the road, was under the walls of Doobno. He scarcely found time to declare the misfortune that had happened; but as to how it had happened, whether the remaining Cossacks had caroused too deeply, according to Cossack fashion, and had been made prisoners whilst tipsy; and how had the Tartars been apprised of the spot where the treasures lay hidden—nothing could he tell about all this. He was too exhausted, the whole of his body was swollen, his face was scorched by the sun and beaten by the wind;he fell on the spot fast asleep.

In such emergencies, the Zaporoghians were accustomed to proceed without the least delay, in pursuit of the invaders, and endeavour to catch them on the way, because the prisoners might be sent in no time to the slave markets of Asia Minor, to Smyrna, to the island of Crete, and wherever else the crown-locked heads of the Zaporoghians might not be expected to make their appearance. It was for this reason that the Zaporoghians had now assembled. They stood now with their heads covered, because they had come together, not by command to hear an order from their chief, but to deliberate as equals among themselves. "Let the elders give their advice first," was the cry heard from the crowd. "Let the Koschevoï give his advice," exclaimed some. And the Koschevoï, cap in hand, no longer as a chief but as a comrade,thanked all the Cossacks for the honour, and spoke thus: "There are many among us who are older than I, and who have more wisdom in their counsels, but as you have honoured me, my advice is this. Do not waste your time, comrades, go in pursuit of the Tartars at once; they are not likely to wait for our arrival with the stolen goods; they will quickly spend them and leave no trace. So this is my advice, go at once. We have done our duty here. The Poles know at present what the Cossacks are; we have avenged our faith as much as lay in our power; no great booty can be found in a famished city; so, this is our advice, go!"go in pursuit of the Tartars at once; they are not likely to wait for our arrival with the stolen goods; they will quickly spend them and leave no trace. So this is my advice, go at once. We have done our duty here. The Poles know at present what the Cossacks are; we have avenged our faith as much as lay in our power; no great booty can be found in a famished city; so, this is our advice, go!"go in pursuit of the Tartars at once; they are not likely to wait for our arrival with the stolen goods; they will quickly spend them and leave no trace. So this is my advice, go at once. We have done our duty here. The Poles know at present what the Cossacks are; we have avenged our faith as much as lay in our power; no great booty can be found in a famished city; so, this is our advice, go!"

"Let us go!" was the shout throughout the Zaporoghian koorens. But the speech was not welcome to

Tarass Boolba, and still deeper over his eyes did he bend his contracted eyebrows, whose grayish white made them resemble bushes which grow on the high crest of mountains, and whose tops are ever covered with the sharp points of the Boreal sleet.

"Not so; thy advice is not good, Ivoschevoï!" said he, "thy speech is all wrong. Thou seemest to forget that our comrades taken by the Poles, are still prisoners? Thou seemest to wish that we should not fulfil the first holy rule of comradeship, that we should leave our brothers that they may be flayed alive, or that their Cossack bodies may be quartered and dragged about through towns and villages, as they have already done with the Hetman and the best Russian knights. Has our faith not yet sustained sufficient insults? Who are we then? I ask all of you, what sort of Cossack is he who leaves his comrade in misfortune—who leaves him to die the death of a dog in a foreign country? If it has come to such a pitch that nobody any longer values the Cossack's honour, that every one allows his gray mustachios to be spit upon,and bears the insult of shameful words, I, for one, will not bear it! Alone will I remain!"

The Zaporoghians wavered.

"And dost thou forget, brave colonel," replied the Koschevoï, "that those who are now in the hands of the Tartars are our comrades too, and that if we do not release them now, they will be sold into life-long slavery to infidels; and that slavery is more bitter than the most cruel death? Dost thou forget that all our treasures, acquired with Christian blood, are now in their hands?"

The Cossacks remained thoughtful, and did not know what to say. None of them were desirous of acquiring a disgraceful character. Then Kassian Bovdug, the oldest in all the Zaporoghian army, stepped forward. He was held in reverence by all the Cossacks; twice had he been elected Koschevoï Ataman, and a good Cossack had he proved in war; but he had long ago grown old, and ceased to take part in campaigns; he did not like to give advice, but the old fellow liked to remain lying in the Cossack circles listening to stories about events which had come to pass, and Cossack exploits in war. He never joined in their talk, but remained constantly listening, pressing with his fingers the ashes in his short pipe, which he never took out of his mouth; and long would he remain with his eyes closed,so that the Cossacks knew not whether he was asleep or listening. During all the late campaigns he had remained at home; but on this occasion he had come too, after waving his hand in the Cossack fashion, and saying, "Happen what will, I'll go, and perhaps be of some Use to my fellow-Cossacks!"

All the Cossacks kept silence as he now appeared before the assembly, because for a long time none had heard him say a single word. Every one was anxious to know what Bovdug would say. "My turn is now come to speak, gentlemen brothers," he began, "listen to the old Cossack's saying, children. Wise were the Koschevoï's words, and, as the chief of the Cossacks, who is bound to preserve the treasures of the army, and to care for them, nothing more wise could he have said. Let this be my first saying; listen now to my second. This is what I will tell you now; great was the truth of what the Colonel Tarass said; may Heaven lengthen his life, and may it send more such colonels to Ukraine! The Cossack's first duty and first glory is to fulfil the duty of comradeship. Long as I have lived in this world, gentlemen brothers,I never happened to hear that a Cossack ever left his comrade, or betrayed him in any emergency. These and those are both our comrades; be their numbers great or small, it is the same thing—both are our comrades, both are dear to us; so this is my saying: let the men to whom those who have been made prisoners by the Tartars are dearer, pursue the Tartars; let the others to whom those who have been made prisoners by the Poles are dearer, and who do not choose to desist from a righteous undertaking, remain here. The Koschevoï, according to his duty, may, with the one party, give chase to the Tartars, and the other party may choose a Nakaznoï Ataman.it is the same thing —both are our comrades, both are dear to us; so this is my saying: let the men to whom those who have been made prisoners by the Tartars are dearer, pursue the Tartars; let the others to whom those who have been made prisoners by the Poles are dearer, and who do not choose to desist from a righteous undertaking, remain here. The Koschevoï, according to his duty, may, with the one party, give chase to

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Thus spake Bovdug, and then remained silent; and the Cossacks were rejoiced at his having settled their minds. They threw their caps up in the air, and cried "Thanks to thee, father! thou kept silent—for a long time hast thou kept silent—and now at last thou hast spoken thy mind; truly saidst thou when joining the campaign, that thou mightest be of use to the Cossacks, so has it proved to be!"

"Well, do you approve this?" asked the Koschevoï.

"Yes, all of us approve it!" cried the Cossacks.

"So, then, the Rada is ended?"

"Yes, it is!" cried the Cossacks.

"Well then, children, listen to my orders now!" said the Koschevoï; and stepping forward, he put on his cap, while all the Zaporoghians, from first to last, took off theirs, and remained uncovered with their eyes bent on the ground, according to the Cossack custom when their chief was about to address them. "Now, gentlemen brothers, separate yourselves! whoever wishes to go, step to the right; whoever remains, go to the left; wherever the greater part of a kooren goes, thither the ataman follows; if the lesser part goes on one side, it may join the other koorens."

And now they began to pass, some to the right, some to the left. Whither the greater went thither followed the ataman, the lesser part always joining with the other koorens. In the end, the two sides proved nearly equal. Among those who chose to remain were not a few of the very very excellent Cossacks.[37] All off them had seen war and campaigns; had sailed to the Anatolian coasts, traversed the Crimean salt-marshes and steppes, knew all the rivers and streams that flow into the Dnieper, all the banks and islands of that river; had been in Moldavia, "Wallachia, and Turkey; had crossed the Black Sea in all directions in their two-helmed Cossack boats—fifty such boats in ranks had attacked the richest and the tallest ships; had sent to the bottom of the sea not a few Turkish galleys, and had fired away much, very much powder in their lives; more than once had they torn to rags costly stuffs and silks to wrap up their feet; more than once had their pockets been full of bright sequins. And it would have been impossible to reckon how much property, which would have lasted others for a whole life, each of them had spent in feasting and drinking. They had spent it all like righteous Cossacks, treating every one and hiring musicians, in order that every one around them might enjoy himself. Even now, there were but few of them who had not treasure hidden underground; cups, silver goblets, and ornaments hidden in the reeds on the islands of the Dnieper, in order that the Tartars should not discover them, if by mischance they should fall upon the Ssiecha unawares; but it was scarcely possible that the Tartars could have found them, for even the owners had begun to forget where they had hidden them.

Such were the Cossacks who resolved to remain, and take their revenge on the Poles for the sake of their beloved comrades and the Christian faith. The old Cossack Bovdug resolved also to abide with them, saying "My years are no longer those in which I could give chase to the Tartars; here is the place where I may find a Cossack's death. For a long time I have prayed God, that I might, when I close my

life, end it in war for some holy and Christian reason. Thus it now happens; the old Cossack could not find a more glorious end, or in a more fitting place."

When all were separated and stood in two rows, in koorens on both sides, the Koschevoï went through the ranks and said, "Well now, gentlemen brothers, is one side pleased with the other?"

"All are pleased, father," answered the Cossacks.

"Well then, embrace one another, and give one another a farewell shake of the hand, for Heaven knows if we are to meet again in this life. Obey your Ataman, do what you know must be done; you know yourselves what a Cossack's honour bids you to do!"

And all the Cossacks, as many as were there, embraced one another. First of all began the atamans, and wiping their gray mustachios with their hands, kissed one another's cheeks, and then as they took one another's hands and held them tight, they wished to ask, "Gentleman brother, shall we ever meet again, or shall we not?" However, they put not the question, but kept silence, and both gray heads remained thoughtful. The Cossacks, too, bade farewell to one another, well knowing that both sides would have hard work; still they decided not to separate at once, but to await the darkness of night, in order that the foe should not perceive the diminution of their forces. They all repaired to their koorens for dinner. After dinner, those who had to go on march laid themselves down for repose, and had a long sound sleep, as if conscious that this would perhaps be their last sleep in such freedom. They slept till the sun set; as it went down and darkness came on, they began to put their carts in order. This done, they made them advance, and themselves bidding once more farewell to their comrades, slowly followed; behind the infantry tramped the cavalry in silence, without crying to their horses or urging them on, and soon, nothing could be seen of them in the darkness of the night. The hollow trampling of the horses alone resounded, and at times was heard the creaking of some wheel, which had not been properly greased on account of the darkness.

The comrades who were left behind, stood a long time waving their hands to them, although nothing could be seen. But when they ceased at last, and came back to their places, when they saw by the light of the stars, which now shone brightly, that half the waggons were gone, and that many, many friends were there no longer, sorrow crept into their hearts, and all became thoughtful and bent down their heads.

Tarass saw how mournful the ranks of the Cossacks had become, and that sadness, unbecoming to brave men, had found its way into the heads of the Cossacks; but he kept silence, wishing to leave time for everything, time to grieve over their parting with their comrades; but while silent, he prepared himself to awaken them all at once by suddenly speaking to them like a Cossack, so that courage might again and with still greater power return to their hearts. The Slavonic race, that wide spreading, that mighty race, is the only one capable of this—a race which, is to others what the sea is to shallow rivulets; when the weather is tempestuous it roars and thunders, rises in mountain-like waves, such as feeble streams can never exhibit; but when there is no storm and all is quiet, it spreads out its immeasurable glassy expanse, clearer than any stream, and soothing to the sight of the beholder.

Tar ass ordered one of his servants to unload one of the carts which stood apart. This cart was the biggest and the strongest in the whole Cossack camp; a double iron hoop encircled its strong wheels; it was heavily loaded, covered with horse-cloths, strong ox-hides, and corded with tarred ropes. It was filled with casks and barrels of old wine which had long lain in Tarass's cellars. He had brought it in preparation for any solemn occasion, when some great event might occur, when some mighty feat, worthy to be recorded for posterity, should be at hand; that then every Cossack, to the very least, might drink some of the precious wine, in order that in a solemn moment, a deep impression might be made on every man. On hearing the colonel's command, his servants rushed to the cart, severed the ropes with their sabres, tore away the thick ox-hides and horse-cloths, and took down the casks and barrels.

"Take, all of you," said Boolba, "all, as many as are here, whatever every one has got; a cup, or the scoop with which you water your horses, or a gauntlet, or a cap—or if you have none of these, why then, hold out the hollow of your hands."

And all the Cossacks, as many as were there, took some of them cups, others scoops with which they gave drink to their horses, others gauntlets, or caps, and some held out the hollow of their hands. To every one of them did the servants of Tarass, as they passed through their ranks, pour out wine from the casks and barrels. But Tarass ordered that none should drink till he gave the signal, in order that all might drink at the same time. One could see that he was about to speak. Tarass knew, excellent as the good old wine might be of itself, and well adapted to raise a man's spirits, that when a well-suited harangue should be joined to its effect, double would be the strength both of wine and of courage.

"I treat you now, gentlemen brothers," so spoke Tarass, "not to celebrate my being elected by you as your ataman, however great that honour be, not to solemnize our parting with our comrades; another time would better suit for both matters. But now we have another more solemn occasion before us. A deed of much labour, of great Cossack valour, now awaits us! So let us drink together, comrades, let us drink first to the holy faith, that the time may at last come when everywhere over the whole world one holy faith may be diffused, and all misbelievers, as many as they are, may become Christians! Let us drink together also to the Ssiecha, that it may long stand for the destruction of all unbelievers, that every year it may send forth warriors, each stronger and better than their predecessors! Let us drink also to our own renown, that our grandchildren, and the sons of those grandchildren, may say that there once were those who did not betray comradeship and did not leave their brothers in need! So to the faith, gentlemen brothers, to the faith!"

"To the faith!" shouted the deep voices of those whose ranks stood nearest. "To the faith!" joined in the more remote, and every one of them, old and young, drank to the faith.

"To the Ssiecha!" said Tarass, and lifted his arm high above his head.

"To the Ssiecha!" deeply resounded amidst the foremost ranks. "To the Ssiecha!" slowly said the old ones, twitching their gray mustachios; and excited, like young hawks fluttering their wings, the young Cossacks shouted, "To the Ssiecha!" And far away the field resounded with the shouts of the Cossacks, "To the Ssiecha!"

"And now, a last dram, comrades: To renown and to all Christians in the world!" And all the Cossacks there present drained the last drop to renown, and to all the Christians who are spread all over the world. And long amidst all the ranks, among the koorens, resounded the words, "To all Christians, all over the world!"

The cups were already empty, and still the Cossacks remained standing with uplifted arms; gay were the glances of all eyes, glistening with wine, but profound were their thoughts. They thought not of booty or profit, they thought not of the ducats they might succeed in taking, or of the costly arms, rich dresses, and Circassian steeds. They were thoughtful as eagles sitting on the crests of rocky cliffs, steep and high, from which may be seen the far-expanding sea, all covered with galleys and ships like so many small birds, and bordered by narrow scarcely visible coasts, with towns no bigger than flies, and woods as diminutive as grass. Like eagles did the Cossacks cast their glances over the field, foreboding their fate which darkened far away before them. Thus indeed shall it be! The field shall be strewn with their whitening bones, it shall be richly bathed in their Cossack blood; and broken chariots, broken swords, and spears, shall be scattered all over it; from a long distance off shall be seen mouldering crown-tufted heads with curling and gore-clotted locks, and downward twisted mustachios; and eagles swooping down from the skies shall tear out and feast on their cossack eyes! But great also is the boon of such a widely and freely-scattered repose in death! No feat of valour shall perish, and the Cossack's fame shall no more be cast away than the grain of powder on the gun-lock. The time shall come when

some bard with gray beard flowing down on his breast, or peradventure some white-haired man, old in years but full of manly vigour, shall with soothsaying words tell of them with mighty utterance. And all over the world shall their renown extend, and even those who are yet unborn shall speak of them. For widely does the mightily-uttered word spread, like the resonance of bell-metal into which the founder has thrown much pure and precious silver, that its solemn tone may echo far away in city and hamlet, palace and hovel, summoning all equally to holy prayer.

IX.

Nobody in the town knew that one-half of the Zaporoghians had gone in pursuit of the Tartars. The sentries on the tower of the town hall had indeed noticed that part of the waggons had been drawn behind the forest, but they thought that the Cossacks had prepared an ambuscade: the French engineer was of the same opinion. Meanwhile, the words of the Ivoschevoï proved true, and victuals began to be scarce in the town. As was usual in old times, they had not calculated the number of troops and the allowance to be made to them. A sally was tried, but one-half of the daring fellows were killed on the spot by the Cossacks, and the other was driven back into the town with no result. The Jews however, profited by this sally, and ferreted out everything, whither and wherefore the Zaporoghians were gone, and with which of the chiefs,also which of the koorens, in what number, and how many were left behind, and what they intended to do; in a word, some minutes had hardly elapsed when everything was known in the town. The colonels took courage, and prepared to give battle. Tarass perceived this by the movement and noise in the town, and, accordingly, busily occupied himself in forming the troops and giving orders; he divided the koorens into three encampments, which he surrounded with waggons by way of fortification, a mode of entrenchment in which the Zaporoghians were never conquered. He sent two koorens into ambuscade, ordered sharp stakes, broken weapons, and stumps of spears to be scattered over part of the field, intending to drive the enemy's cavalry to that locality when the opportunity should present itself. And when all his orders had been executed,he harangued the Cossacks, not in order to encourage them, or to heighten their spirits, for he knew them to be spirited enough, but simply because he wished to say what weighed on his own heart.

"I wish to tell you, gentlemen, what our comradeship is. You have heard from your fathers and grandfathers how highly esteemed our country has been, how it caused itself to be honoured by the Greeks, how the city of the Caesars[38]paid ducats to it, how rich its towns were, how beautiful its churches, what men were its sovereigns—sovereigns of Russian pedigree, its own bosom sovereigns, and no Popish heretics. All this have the misbelievers destroyed; everything have they laid waste. We remained orphans, and our country like ourselves has been bereft too, like a widow after the loss of a mighty husband! This was the time, comrades, when we held out our hands to one another to be brothers! This is the foundation of our brotherhood! No ties are more holy than those of comradeship. The father loves his child, the mother loves her child, the child loves its father and mother; but this is no wonder. The brute loves its cub, too! but man alone can make to himself relations by the relationship of the heart, without that of blood! There have been comrades in other countries,but such comrades as are in our Russian country, such, I say, have never existed elsewhere. More than one of you have been dragged away into foreign countries; there, too, you have seen men! They also are God's creatures; with them also did you speak as with your own countrymen; but when you had to tell them what you felt in the inmost recesses of your hearts, then you saw the difference! Clever men are they, but not like our countrymen! men, also, but not like us! No, brothers, to love as a Russian heart loves—not to love with your mind, or anything else, but to love with all that God has given us, with all your being, with all, all," said Tarass; and he waved his arm, and shook his gray head, and jerked his mustachios, and then went on: "To love in such a manner, nobody but Russians can love.I know that baseness has found its

way into our country; many think only about having heaps of corn and hay, herds of horses, and of preserving untouched in their cellars their sealed casks of mead; many ape the devil knows what customs of misbelievers, and are ashamed of their native speech, they avoid meeting their countrymen, they sell them, as one sells brutes in the market. Higher than any brotherhood do they value the favour of a foreign king, no, not merely of a king, but even the base favour of a Polish magnate, who tramples on their faces with his yellow boots. But yet the basest of them, be he base as man can be, be he all besmeared with dirt and flattery, even he, brothers, has some grain of Russian feeling in his breast; he will wake up at some time, and the poor fellow will wring his hands,he will tear his hair and curse his base life, and be ready by torments of every description to redeem it. Let every one of them know what comradeship means in our Russian country. If it has come to that point, that we must die, well then, let us die as none of them may ever die! no, not one! their mouse-like nature would not dare to confront such death!"

Thus spoke the ataman, and as he ended his speech, he still shook his head, grown silver-gray in Cossack feats; strongly did the speech impress all who stood there, and straight to their hearts did it go; even the oldest stood motionless in their ranks, their gray heads bent down towards the ground, and a tear slowly rolled from their old eyes; slowly did they brush it away with their sleeves, and then all, as with one accord, waved their hands at once and shook their heads.

Old Tarass, it would seem, had struck upon many recollections of those best feelings which throng into the hearts of men whose spirits have been tried by sorrow, by hard labour, by valour, and by every possible misfortune; or of men, who, if even unacquainted with hardships, anticipate them in their pure pearl-like souls, and afford promise of perpetual joy to the old parents who gave them life.

Meanwhile, the enemy's army was already emerging from the town, drums were beating, trumpets sounding, and the officers, surrounded by numberless servants, were already riding out of the gate, their hands haughtily resting on their hips. The stout colonel was giving his orders. Now, they briskly attacked the Cossacks' encampment, threatening, aiming their guns, rolling their eyes, and glittering in their brass armour. As soon as the Cossacks saw they had come within gunshot, they sent all at once a volley of bullets, and without any interruption poured forth shot after shot from their long barrelled guns. Far away, in all the surrounding fields and pastures, did the thundering crash resound, forming a continuous roar; smoke spread over all the field, and the Zaporoghians went on firing without ever pausing to take breath;the rear-ranks did nothing but load the guns, which they passed to the foremost ranks; and the enemy marvelled, and could not understand how the Cossacks managed to shoot without loading their guns. Already the denseness of the smoke prevented them from seeing how one here, another there, fell in the ranks; but the Poles felt that the volleys of bullets were thick, and that the fight would prove serious; and as they drew back to get out of the smoke, and looked at their ranks, many were those whom they found missing; while the Cossacks had not lost more than some two or three men out of every hundred. And still the Cossacks went on firing, giving not a moment of respite. Even the foreign engineer marvelled at their tactics, which he had never witnessed before, and said, before all who stood near him, "They are clever fellows,these Zaporoghians! that is a way of fighting which ought to be followed in other countries!" and he advised that no time should be lost in turning the cannon against their encampment. Heavy was the roar of the wide-throated iron guns; far did the ground tremble and resound; and smoke, still more dense, spread over all the field. In the squares and streets of cities far and near, could the smell of powder be perceived. But the gunners had taken their aim at too great an elevation, and too high did the red-hot balls fly; after giving a fearful whizz in the air, they flew over the heads of the Zaporoghians and buried themselves deep in the ground, tearing up and tossing the black earth high in the air. The French engineer tore his hair at seeing such want of skill, and began to point the cannons himself, without taking heed of the Cossacks'bullets, which flew unceasingly. Tarass saw at once that evil was in store for two of the koorens, and shouted at the top of

his voice: "Quickly away out of the camp, and on horseback every one of you!" But hardly would the Cossacks have had the time to do either, had not Ostap rushed into the very midst of the enemy; he tore the matches out of the hands of six of the gunners, but he failed to do the same to the remaining four, being driven back by the Poles. Meanwhile, the French engineer took the match with his own hand, to fire the biggest of the cannons, the like of which none of the Cossacks had ever seen before. Fearfully did its wide mouth gape, and a thousand deaths seemed to look out of it. And as it went off, and the three others followed it, while the dull resounding ground re-echoed their roar—much harm did they accomplish!More than one Cossack shall be bewailed by his old mother, who shall beat her withered bosom with her bony hands; more than one woman shall be widowed in Glookhov, Nemeerov, Chernigov, and other towns! Poor widows will every day run to the market, stop every passer-by, to have a peep at his face, to see if he be not the one dearest above all; but many Cossacks shall pass the city, and yet the one dearest above all, shall not be among them.and yet the one dearest above all, shall not be among them.and yet the one dearest above all, shall not be among them.

Half of the Nezamaikovskoï kooren seemed never to have been there! As hail strikes down a whole corn field, where every ear is heavy as a full weighing ducat, so were they stricken down and laid on the ground.

How infuriate grew the Cossacks! how all of them rushed forward! how did the blood boil in the heart of Ivookoobenko, the koorennoï ataman, when he saw that the best part of his kooren was no more! He took the remainder of his Cossacks, threw himself with them into the very midst of the battle; in his fury, hacked to pieces the first whom he reached, threw many off their horses, spearing both riders and horses, cut his way to the gunners, and had already taken one of the guns—but there he beholds the ataman of the Omanskoï kooren busily engaged about the cannons, and that Stephen Gooska has already taken the big one. Kookoobenko left them to do their business there, and led his Cossacks into another crowd of enemies; wherever the Nezamaikovskoï kooren has passed, a street is opened there, wherever they have turned there is a lane![39] Everywhere the ranks of the foe were seen to grow thinner, and Poles were seen falling like sheaves of corn! Next to the waggons fought Vovtoozenko; in front of them Cherivichenko; farther off Degtiarenko, and still farther, the koorennoï Vertykhoist. Two officers had Degtiarenko picked up on his spear, a third proved to be more obstinate. Stalwart and strong was the Polish officer, rich was his armour, and no fewer than fifty servants had he brought in his train. Strongly did he attack Degtiarenko; he had already brought him down on the ground, and brandishing his sword over his head, crying: "None of you, Cossack dogs, no, not one, will ever dare to confront me!"

"Not so, there are some left still," said Mossy Sheelo, stepping forward. A strong Cossack was he; more than once had he been ataman in sea campaigns, and many had been the sufferings he had endured. He had been made prisoner by the Turks near Trebizond, and all his Cossacks had been brought prisoners on the Turkish galleys, with their hands and feet fettered in iron chains; whole weeks they had had no millet for food, and nothing but disgusting sea-water for drink. All this had the poor prisoners endured rather than forfeit the faith of their fathers. Not so their ataman, Mossy Sheelo; he trampled the holy faith under foot, put the accursed turban on his sinful head, acquired the confidence of the Pacha, was made gaoler in the galley, and overseer of the prisoners. Greatly were the poor prisoners aggrieved by this; for they knew that no tyranny can be heavier and more bitter than that of a man who has betrayed his faith and passed over to the persecutors. So it proved; Mossy Sheelo put them all into new triple chains, bound them with hard ropes, which cut through to their white bones. At his hands every one of them received strokes and blows. But when the Turks, glad to have acquired so good a servant, and unmindful of their law, all got drunk, Sheelo brought all the sixty-four keys, and gave them to the prisoners that they might unlock their fetters, throw them into the sea, and take in their stead sabres, with which to cut the Turks in pieces. Much booty did the Cossacks take then, with glory did they

return home, and long afterwards did the musicians sing the praises of Mossy Sheelo. He might have been elected Koschevoï, but he was a strange Cossack; at one time he did such deeds as the wisest could never have planned, at others, he seemed possessed by madness. So he spent everything in drinking and feasting, went in debt to every one in the Ssiecha, and at last betook himself to robbing; one night he stole from another kooren a complete Cossack's equipment, and pawned it to the brandy-shop. For so base a deed he was tied to the pillory in the market, and a bludgeon placed beside him, in order that every one, according to his strength, might give him a blow; but not one was found among the Zaporoghians to raise the bludgeon against him, so highly did they value his past services. Such was the Cossack Mossy Sheelo.

"Yes, there are still some to beat you dogs!" exclaimed he, attacking the officer. Then how they fought! Both had their breastplates and shoulder-pieces bent by the weight of their blows. The cursed Pole cut through his foe's coat of mail, and his blade penetrated to the very flesh; the Cossack's mail-coat was reddened with blood, but Sheelo paid no attention to it; down went his sinewy arm (heavy was that mighty arm!), and its blow stunned his foe, and Sheelo went on hacking and hewing to pieces his insensible foe. "Do not hack him thus, Cossack; 'twere better to turn round!" The Cossack did not turn round, and on the spot one of the dead officer's servants plunged his knife into Sheelo's throat. Sheelo turned, and would have caught his murderer, but he was already lost in the smoke. From every quarter the guns were now firing. Sheelo staggered, and felt that his wound was mortal; he fell on the ground, put his hand on his wound, and turning to his comrades, said: "Fare ye well, gentlemen brother-comrades! May the orthodox Russian country for ever last, and may its glory endure for ever!" And he closed his weakened eyes, and away flew the Cossack's soul out of his hard body. Meantime Zadorojni led his Cossacks into the fight; the koorennoï ataman Vertykhoist was breaking the enemy's ranks, and Balaban was advancing.

"How now, gentlemen!" said Tarass, summoning the atamans of the koorens, "is there still powder in the horns? is not the Cossack's strength yet faint? do not the Cossacks give way?"

"There is still powder in the horns, father; the Cossacks' strength is not yet faint; the Cossacks do not yet give way."

Vigorously did the Cossacks attack; they broke through all the ranks. The diminutive colonel ordered the retreat to be beaten, and eight coloured standards to be hoisted, in order to gather together the Poles dispersed far away over all the field. The Poles rushed towards the standards; but they had not time to rally before Kookoobenko again fell into their very centre with the Cossacks of his kooren, and went straight at the stout colonel; the colonel could not stand his attack, turned his horse and fled at its utmost speed; and Kookoobenko chased him over all the field, giving him no time to join his regiment. Seeing this from one of the koorens on the flank, Stephen Gooska joined in the pursuit, his arkan in hand, his head bent down to his horse's neck, and choosing his time, threw the arkan suddenly round the colonel's throat; deep red grew the colonel's face, with both hands he seized the cord, endeavouring to break it; but a strong blow had already sent a spear through his body, and there he remained nailed to the spot. But Gooska, too, must meet his fate! Hardly had the Cossacks had time to look back, when they saw Stephen Gooska pierced with four spears. The poor fellow had only time to say: "Let all our enemies perish, and may the Russian land exult for ever!" when he breathed his last. The Cossacks looked back, and there, on the one side is Metelitza, treating the Poles with blows, first one and then another; there, on the other side, the ataman Revelichki falls on with his kooren; there, near the waggons, the foe is driven back and beaten down by Zakrootygooba; and farther off, the third Pissarenko has put to flight a whole crowd; and still farther, round the remotest waggons, the fight is still hotter, and they fight on the very waggons.

"Gentlemen," cried the Ataman Tarass, riding in front, "is there still powder in the horns? is the Cossack's strength still strong? have not the Cossacks already given way?"

"There is still powder in the horns, father! still is the Cossack's strength entire, nor have the Cossacks yet given way!"

Bovdug fell down from his waggon; a bullet had struck him just beneath his heart; but the old man gathered up his strength and said, "I do not regret leaving the world; may God grant such a death to you all; and to the last may the Russian land be glorious!" and Bovdug's soul flew up to heaven to tell old men, long since departed, that Russians know how to fight, and still better, that Russians know how to die for their holy faith!

Soon after him, the koorennoï ataman Balaban fell also. Three deadly wounds from spear, from bullet, and from sabre, had fallen to his lot. He had been one of the bravest Cossacks; many times had he led the Cossacks over sea; but most glorious of all had been his campaign to the Anatolian coast. Many sequins had they then taken, much costly Turkish goods, stuffs, and ornaments. But grief was in store for them on their return; they fell in, poor fellows, with Turkish cannon. As the ship fired her broadside, half of their boats went wheeling round and upset, and many Cossacks were drowned in the sea; but the boats did not sink, thanks to the bundles of reeds tied to their edges. Balaban fled at the utmost speed of his oars, took his stand straight under the sun, so as not to be seen by the Turkish ship. All night long after this did the Cossacks bale out the water from the boats with their scoops and caps, and mend the rent planks; of their Cossack trowsers they made sails, caught the wind, and escaped from the swiftest of all the Turkish ships. And not only did they safely return to the Ssiecha, but brought a gold embroidered dress to the abbot of the monastery of Kieff, and a plate of pure silver for the church of the Ssiecha. And long afterwards was the Cossacks' feat the theme of the musician's praises. But Balaban bent down his head, and feeling the approach of death, slowly said, "It seems to me, gentlemen brothers, that my death is a good death! Seven have I cut down with my sword, nine have I pierced with my spear, many have I trampled under my steed's feet, and so many have I hit with my bullets, that I cannot recollect their number. So then, may the Russian land flourish for ever!" and away his soul took its flight.

Cossacks, Cossacks! do not let the best flower of your army be taken from you! Already is Kookoobenko surrounded; already seven men are all that remain of the Nezamaikovskoï kooren, already they are nearly overpowered, and bloody are Kookoobenko's garments! Tarass himself, seeing his danger, hastened to his rescue. But the Cossacks were too late; a spear had already gone deep beneath his heart, before the foes who surrounded him were driven away. Slowly he drooped on the Cossacks who caught him in their arms, and his young blood streamed forth, like costly wine which careless servants bringing in a crystal flask from the cellar, and slipping at the entrance, have spilled on the ground; the precious flask is broken to pieces, the wine flows over the floor, and the master comes running and tearing his hair; he who had preserved that wine for the best occasion of his life, in order that if in his old days he ever happened to meet a comrade of his youth, he might remember with him bygone times, when different and better were the joys of men! Kookoobenko looked around him, and said, "Thank God, comrades, that I happen to die beneath your eyes! May those after us live better than we have done, and may everlasting felicity be the lot of the Christ-beloved Russian land!" And away flew the young soul. Angels raised it in their hands, and carried it to Heaven. "Sit down on my right hand, Kookoobenko," will Christ say to him, "thou didst not betray thy comrades, didst no dishonest deed, didst not forsake a man in distress, and didst preserve and defend my faith!"

All were grieved by Kookoobenko's death; thinner and thinner grew the Cossacks' ranks, yet still they kept their ground.

"How now, gentlemen?" cried Tarass to the remaining koorens, "is there still powder in the horns? are not the sabres grown blunt? is not the Cossack's strength tired? are not the Cossacks giving way?"

"There is still powder enough, father! the sabres are still good! the Cossacks' strength fails not, nor

have they given way!"

And again the Cossacks rushed on, as if they had sustained no loss. Of the koorennoï atamans, three alone remained alive. Crimson streams of blood flowed in every direction, and the corpses of Cossacks and foes were piled in heaps. Tarass looked up to the sky, and behold, long lines of birds of prey were already there! A glorious feast will be theirs!

And now, behold, Metelitza is pierced by a spear! and there falls the head of the second Pissarenko, rolling and quivering its eyelids; there falls heavily Okhrim Gooska, brought down and hewn into four pieces. "'Tis well!" said Tarass, and waved his handkerchief. Ostap understood the signal, and darting out of his ambuscade, furiously attacked the cavalry. The Poles could not withstand his impetuous attack, gave way; and were driven straight towards the spot where the ground was strewn with broken spears and stakes. The horses stumbled and fell at every step, and their riders were thrown over their heads. Just then, the Korsoonskoï kooren which stood behind the remotest waggons, seeing the enemy within gunshot, sent them a volley of musketry.

The Poles lost all presence of mind—the Cossacks regained courage. "The victory is ours!" shouted the Zaporoghians on all sides; the trumpets sounded; the victory banner was hoisted. Everywhere the discomfited Poles were to be seen flying and concealing themselves. "Not yet! the victory is not yet ours!" said Tarass, looking towards the town gate; and truly did he say so. The gate was thrown open, and out flew the hussar regiment, the choicest of all the Polish cavalry. All the riders were mounted on chestnut steeds, all equally fine. In front rode a knight, the finest and most spirited of them all; black curls waved from beneath his brass helmet; a costly scarf, embroidered by the fairest beauty, fluttered round his arm. Tarass was astounded at recognising in him Andrew! Meanwhile, Andrew, entirely given up to the heat and excitement of the battle, and fervently anxious to deserve the token tied upon his arm, flew like a young greyhound, the finest, swiftest, and youngest of all the pack; the experienced huntsman has hallooed to, and there it flies, its legs stretched in a straight line through the air,its body drawn a little on one side, puffing up the snow, and in the heat of its race, ten times outstripping the hare. Old Tarass remained standing and watching how he cleared his way, drove back those before him, cutting and hewing on each side. Tarass could refrain no longer, and exclaimed, "How? thine own comrades? thy brothers? devil's son, dost thou hew them?" But Andrew saw not who was before him, whether his comrades or others. He saw nothing but ringlets, long, long ringlets, a bosom white as a swan's, a snow-like neck and shoulders, and all that is created for frantic kisses.Tarass could refrain no longer, and exclaimed, "How? thine own comrades? thy brothers? devil's son, dost thou hew them?" But Andrew saw not who was before him, whether his comrades or others. He saw nothing but ringlets, long, long ringlets, a bosom white as a swan's, a snow-like neck and shoulders, and all that is created for frantic kisses.Tarass could refrain no longer, and exclaimed, "How? thine own comrades? thy brothers? devil's son, dost thou hew them?" But Andrew saw not who was before him, whether his comrades or others. He saw nothing but ringlets, long, long ringlets, a bosom white as a swan's, a snow-like neck and shoulders, and all that is created for frantic kisses.

"Children! lure him to the wood, lure him towards me!" shouted Tarass. Immediately some thirty Cossacks started for the purpose. Pulling their tall caps over their brows, they rode at the utmost speed of their horses to cut their way to the hussars. They attacked the foremost in flank, confused their ranks, cut them off from those behind, and wounded some of them; Golokopytenko struck Andrew on the back with his sabre, and then, all betook themselves to flight at the utmost speed of their horses. How incensed was Andrew! how intensely did his young blood boil in all his veins! Striking his sharp spurs into the sides of his horse, he set off at full speed in pursuit of the Cossacks, without looking back, and without seeing that not more than twenty men followed him; the Cossacks continued to ride at full gallop,and turned straight towards the wood. Andrew had already reached Golokopytenko, when a strong arm seized his bridle. Andrew turned round; Tarass stood before him! A shudder ran through all

his body and he turned pale. Like a schoolboy, who, after having unwittingly offended his comrade, and received a stroke on the head with his ruler, fires up at once, furiously rushes from his bench, darts after his terrified comrade, wishes to tear him to pieces, then suddenly encounters the master, entering the schoolroom; at once the frantic impulse is calmed, and the powerless fury vanishes. Even so, in one instant did Andrew's wrath vanish, as if he had never felt it. And he saw before him nothing but the terrific figure of his father.Tarass stood before him! A shudder ran through all his body and he turned pale. Like a schoolboy, who, after having unwittingly offended his comrade, and received a stroke on the head with his ruler, fires up at once, furiously rushes from his bench, darts after his terrified comrade, wishes to tear him to pieces, then suddenly encounters the master, entering the schoolroom; at once the frantic impulse is calmed, and the powerless fury vanishes. Even so, in one instant did Andrew's wrath vanish, as if he had never felt it. And he saw before him nothing but the terrific figure of his father.Tarass stood before him! A shudder ran through all his body and he turned pale. Like a schoolboy, who, after having unwittingly offended his comrade, and received a stroke on the head with his ruler, fires up at once, furiously rushes from his bench, darts after his terrified comrade, wishes to tear him to pieces, then suddenly encounters the master, entering the schoolroom; at once the frantic impulse is calmed, and the powerless fury vanishes. Even so, in one instant did Andrew's wrath vanish, as if he had never felt it. And he saw before him nothing but the terrific figure of his father.darts after his terrified comrade, wishes to tear him to pieces, then suddenly encounters the master, entering the schoolroom; at once the frantic impulse is calmed, and the powerless fury vanishes. Even so, in one instant did Andrew's wrath vanish, as if he had never felt it. And he saw before him nothing but the terrific figure of his father.darts after his terrified comrade, wishes to tear him to pieces, then suddenly encounters the master, entering the schoolroom; at once the frantic impulse is calmed, and the powerless fury vanishes. Even so, in one instant did Andrew's wrath vanish, as if he had never felt it. And he saw before him nothing but the terrific figure of his father.

"Well, what are we to do now?" said Tarass, looking him full in the face. But Andrew could find nothing to answer, and remained with his eyes cast down upon the ground.

"Well, son, of what avail were thy Poles to thee?"

Andrew continued speechless.

"To betray—to betray thy faith? to betray thy brothers? Well, dismount from thy horse!"

Obedient as a child, he dismounted, and, unconscious of what he did, remained standing before Tarass.

"Stand, and do not move! I gave thee life: I kill thee!" said Tarass; and, falling back a step, he took his gun from his shoulder. Andrew was deadly pale; his lips moved slowly, muttering some name; but it was not the name of his country, nor that of his mother or brother: it was the name of the beautiful Polish girl. Tarass fired. As an ear of corn cut down by the sickle—as a young lamb when it feels the deadly steel beneath its heart, so did he droop his head, and fell on the grass without uttering a word.

The slayer of his son stood and gazed long upon the breathless corpse. Even in death he was still beautiful; his manly face, but a minute before full of power and fascination, irresistible for women, still showed marvellous beauty; his black eyebrows seemed, like mourning velvet, to heighten the pallor of his features. "What a Cossack he might have been!" said Tarass; "so tall his stature, so black his eyebrows, with the countenance of a gentleman, and an arm strong in battle. He perished, and perished ignominiously, like a vile dog!"

"Father! what hast thou done? Didst thou kill him?" cried Ostap, who had ridden to the spot by this time.

Tarass nodded his head.

Ostap looked steadfastly into the eyes of the dead. He pitied the fate of his brother, and said, "Well, father, let us bury him decently, that the foe may not insult his corpse, and that it may not be torn to pieces by birds of prey."

"Others will bury him without us," answered Tarass. "There will be mourners and waiters enough!"

For a few seconds he considered: was the corpse to be left a prey to wolves, or was it to be spared on account of Andrew's knightly valour, which the brave should ever respect, it signifies not in whom it may be found? But see! there comes Golokopytenko galloping towards him. "Woe to us, Ataman! the Poles grow stronger; new reinforcements have come to them."

Hardly had Golokopytenko done speaking, when Yovtoozenko came riding up, at full speed. "Woe to us, Ataman! new forces come unceasingly!" Hardly had Vovtoozenko done speaking, when Pissarenko runs up on foot. "Where art thou, father? the Cossacks are seeking for thee. Already is the koorennoï ataman Nevelichki killed; Zadorojni is killed; Cherevichenko killed too! but the Cossacks keep their stand, and will not die before looking into thy face; they wish that thou shouldst see them at the hour of death!"

"To horse, Ostap!" said Tarass, and hastened to join the Cossacks, to behold them once more, and to give them a last sight of their ataman before death. But they had not yet extricated themselves from the wood, as it was surrounded by the enemy's forces on all sides; and everywhere among the trees were riders with sabres and spears. "Ostap, Ostap, do not yield," cried Tarass, and then he himself, unsheathing hit sabre, began to deal blows on all sides to those whom he first met with. Meanwhile, six men had already sprung upon Ostap; but they found it no lucky moment. The head of one flew off at once; another wheeled round and turned back; the spear entered the ribs of a third; the fourth, more daring, threw his head on one side to avoid a bullet. The bullet entered his steed's breast,the infuriated animal threw itself back, fell on the ground, and crushed its rider beneath its weight. "Well, done, my boy; well done, Ostap!" shouted Tarass; "I am coming!" and then himself repelled the assailants. Tarass fights and deals heavy blows, first on one, then on the head of another, and all the while looks forward at Ostap, and now sees that no less than eight are again attacking him at once. "Ostap! Ostap! do not yield!" But Ostap is already conquered; already an enemy has thrown the arkan round Ostap's neck; already is Ostap bound; already is Ostap dragged away. "Ostap, Ostap!" shouted Tarass, clearing his way towards him, and hewing away at every one who crossed his path. "Ostap, Ostap!" But at the same moment he seemed stunned by some heavy stone;everything wheeled and turned round before his eyes. For a moment things glimmered confusedly in his sight—heads, spears, smoke, flashes of fire, boughs of trees with leaves. And down he went on the ground, like an oak hewn at its root, and a cloud spread over his eyes.

X.

"How long I have slept!" said Tarass, awakening, as if after a heavy drunken sleep, and endeavouring to make out the surrounding objects. He felt a fearful weakness in all his limbs. Scarcely could his eyes follow the outlines of the walls and corners of an unknown room. At last he recognised Tovkach, who was sitting beside him, and seemed to watch his every breath.

"Yes," thought Tovkach to himself, "thou hast all but had thy last sleep!" He, however, said nothing, and held up his finger, to make Tarass understand that he was to be silent.

"Tell me, where am I now?" asked Tarass, collecting his thoughts, and endeavouring to bring back his recollection of the past.

"Hold thy tongue," said his comrade, sternly rebuking him. "What wouldst thou know more? Dost thou not feel that thou art all mangled? For the last fortnight we have been riding hard with thee, without ever stopping, and thou all the time with fever and delirium. 'Tis now the first time that thou hast had a quiet sleep. Hold thy tongue, if thou wilt not bring woe upon thy head."

But Tarass still endeavoured to gather his thoughts, and to recollect the past. "But how is it? I was quite taken and surrounded by the Poles. I had no possibility of cutting my way through the crowd?"

"Hold thy tongue, I tell thee, devil's son!" angrily cried Tovkach, as a nurse out of temper cries to a naughty child. "Of what use is it for thee to know how thou didst escape? Thou hast escaped, that's enough. There were men at hand who did not forsake thee; well, that is all thou needest know. We have still many nights to ride hard together. Dost thou think thou art worth no more than a common Cossack? Not so; they have set a price of two thousand ducats on thy head."

"And what of Ostap?" suddenly cried Tarass, endeavouring to rise, for he remembered all at once how Ostap had been caught and bound before his eyes, and how he must now be in the hands of the Poles. And grief rushed into his old head. He tore the bandages from his wounds, threw them far away, and wished to say something aloud; but his mind began to wander. Fever and delirium once more fell on him, and he ejaculated raving sentences without any sense or connection. Meanwhile his faithful comrade stood before him, grumbling and uttering without interruption, scolding words, and gruff reproaches. At last he took hold of his feet and hands, swaddled him round like a baby, set all the bandages in order, packed him up in an ox-hide? bound him round with sheets of bark, and then, tying him with a rope to his saddle, once more galloped away.

"I'll bring thee home, shouldst thou even die by the way. I will not let the Poles deride thy Cossack birth, tear thy body to pieces, and cast them into the river. And if an eagle is to peck thine eyes out of thy skull, it shall, at all events, be the eagle of our steppes, and not the Polish eagle—no, not the one that comes from Poland! Shouldst thou not be alive, it's the same thing. I'll bring thee over to Ukraine."

Thus spoke the faithful comrade, and riding day and night, without ever taking repose, he brought the still unconscious Tarass to the Zaporoghian Ssiecha. There he untiringly treated him with simples and poultices; he found a knowing Jewess, who, during a whole month, administered different medicines to Tarass; and at last Tarass improved. Perhaps the medicines took effect, and perhaps simply his own iron strength saved him; but in six weeks he was on his feet again, his wounds healed, and the sabre scars alone showed how deep they had been. However, he had grown evidently sullen and sorrowful. Three deep furrows crossed his brow, and never again left it. He looked about him, all were new in the Ssiecha; the old comrades had all died away. Not one remained of those who had stood up for the good cause, for faith and brotherhood.Those who went with the Koschevoï to pursue the Tartars, they, too, were long since no more—every one had perished, every one had met his end; some were killed in glorious fight, some had died in the Crimean salt-marshes of hunger and thirst, some had pined to death, not being able to endure the shame of captivity; the Koschevoï was also long ago no more of this world, like all the old comrades, and the grass was already growing over the bodies of those in whose veins once boiled the Cossack's valour.the Koschevoï was also long ago no more of this world, like all the old comrades, and the grass was already growing over the bodies of those in whose veins once boiled the Cossack's valour.the Koschevoï was also long ago no more of this world, like all the old comrades, and the grass was already growing over the bodies of those in whose veins once boiled the Cossack's valour.

In vain were attempts made to divert and enliven Tarass; in vain bearded gray-haired bards came in bands of two or three at a time to sing the praises of his Cossack feats; his features retained a harsh indifferent expression, and an unquenchable sorrow was seen on them, as, with his head bent down he murmured in a subdued voice, "My son! My Ostap!"

The Zaporoghians prepared for a sea campaign. Two hundred boats sailed down the Dnieper, and Asia Minor saw their shaven and crown-tufted heads, while they put everything on its blooming coast to fire and sword; it saw the turbans of its Mahometan inhabitants, like numberless flowers, strewn about on its fields soaked in blood, or floating near its shores. It saw not a few tar-besmeared Zaporoghian trowsers, and sinewy arms with black nagaïkas.[40] The Zaporoghians devoured and destroyed all the vineyards; left heaps of dirt in the Mosques; used costly Persian shawls instead of belts, and girded their dirty coats with them. Long afterwards, were the short Zaporoghian pipes to be found in these places. The Zaporoghians started gaily on their return; a ten-gun Turkish brig gave chase to them, and with a volley from its broadside dispersed their boats like birds; one-third of the Cossacks were drowned in the deep sea; but the remainder joined once more together and came into the mouth of the Dnieper, bringing with them twelve barrels full of sequins.

But all this no longer diverted Tarass. He went into the fields and into the steppes as if to hunt, but his gun remained unfired, and with a sorrowful heart he laid it down, and sat by the sea-shore. He remained there long with drooping head, saying all the time, "My Ostap! My Ostap!" Bright and wide was the Black Sea before him, the gull shrieked in the distant reeds, his white mustachios glistened like silver, and one tear rolled after another.

At last Tarass could bear it no longer: "Happen what will! I'll go and ascertain what has befallen him. Is he still alive? is he in his tomb? or is nothing left of him even in his tomb? I'll ascertain it at all events!"

And a week had hardly passed when he made his appearance in the town of Ooman, armed from head to foot, on horseback, with spear, with sabre, with a traveller's cask tied to his saddle, a pot of flour, cartridge box, horse shackles, and all other travelling implements. He rode straight towards a dirty cottage whose small smutty windows could hardly be distinguished, a rug was stuck into the chimney, and the dilapidated roof was covered with sparrows; a heap of all sorts of filth lay close to the entrance door. The head of a Jewess, in a head-dress with tarnished false pearls, was seen looking out of one of the windows.

"Is thy husband at home?" said Boolba, dismounting, and tying his horse's bridle to an iron hook beside the door.

"Yes," answered the Jewess, hastily coming out, with a scoop of wheat for the horse and a cup of beer for the rider.

"Where is thy Jew, then?"

"He is in the further room, praying," said the Jewess, bowing and wishing health to Boolba, as he carried the cup to his lips.

"Remain here, feed my horse, and give him some drink. I'll go and have a talk with your husband alone, I have business with him."

The Jew was our acquaintance Yankel. He had become a farmer and a brandy-shop keeper, had by degrees got into his power all the neighbouring lords and gentlemen, had by degrees sucked out almost all the money in the district, and had left strong marks of his Jewish presence in the country. For three hours' journey all around, no cottage remained which was not falling into ruins, everything went wrong, every one looked older, all had become drunkards, and all had become beggars clad in rags. The whole district seemed to have suffered from a fire or a plague. And had Yankel remained there but some ten years longer, the whole voevodship would certainly have undergone the same fate.

Tarass stepped into the room; the Jew was praying, his head covered with a tolerably dirty piece of linen, and he had just turned, in order to spit for the last time, according to the Jewish ritual, when his eyes suddenly met the figure of Boolba, who stood behind him. The two thousand ducats offered for

Boolba's head rushed at once into the Jew's remembrance, but he felt ashamed of the thought, and endeavoured to get the better of this love of gold, which, like a worm, is always twining itself round every Jew's heart.

"Harkee, Yankel!" said Tarass to the Jew, who began bowing to him, and warily shut the door behind him, in order that nobody should see them. "I saved thy life; the Zaporoghians would have torn thee to pieces like a dog—now thy turn is come, now thou must render me a service!"

The Jew's face expressed some uneasiness: "What service? If it be such a service as one may render, why not render it?"

"No talking! Take me to Warsaw!"

"To Warsaw? How so, to Warsaw?" said Yankel, with eyebrows and shoulders elevated in amazement.

"No talking! Take me to Warsaw. Come what will, I must see him once more! I must say, be it but one word to him."

"One word to whom?"

"To him, to Ostap, to my son!"

"Does not my lord know, then, that"—

"I know it, I know all. They have set a price of two thousand ducats upon my head. The fools, they did not even know its worth! I'll give five thousand ducats to thee. Here thou hast two thousand on the spot," and Boolba produced from his leathern bag two thousand ducats. "The rest when I come back."

The Jew took at once a piece of linen and covered the ducats with it. "Fine coins, these! beautiful coins!" said he, turning a ducat in his fingers and trying it with his teeth. "Methinks the man from whom my lord took such fine ducats, did not live an hour more, but just leaped into the water and drowned himself, after having lost these magnificent ducats."

"I would not have asked thee—I might perhaps have found my way to Warsaw by myself; but the cursed Poles may chance to recognise and seize me; I have no turn for contrivances, and you, Jews, you seem to have been made for them. You could cheat the devil himself; you know all kinds of such tricks, and this is the reason why I came to thee. The more so, as I could do nothing in Warsaw by myself. Go at once, put the horse to thy cart, and take me."

"And does my lord think there is nothing more to be done than to put the horse to the cart and cry, 'Gee up,' and away? Does my lord think that he can be taken just as he is, without concealing his lordship?"

"Well, then, conceal me, conceal me as thou knowest how; put me into an empty cask, if thou think it best."

"And does my lord think that he can be concealed in an empty cask? Does my lord not consider that every one will think that there is brandy in the cask?"

"Well, let them think so!"

"How so—let them think that there is brandy?" said the Jew, pulling his curls, and then lifting his hands above his head.

"Well, what frightens thee now?"

"And does my lord not know that brandy is made on purpose that every one may taste it? There are all along the road men fond of dainties and of drink; there is not one Polish gentleman who would not run for hours behind the cask, in order to make a hole in it, and if he sees that no brandy flows out of it, he will directly say, c A Jew would not bring an empty cask; there must be something in it! Let the Jew be

arrested, let the Jew be bound, let the Jew give up all his money, let the Jew be thrown into prison!' Because everything disagreeable is done to a Jew, because every one takes a Jew for nothing better than a dog, because nobody holds a Jew to be even a man!"

"Well, then, put me into a cart with fish."

"It is impossible, my lord, by Heaven it is; all over Poland men are now as hungry as dogs; they will steal the fish and discover my lord."

"Well, then, put me anywhere, be it even on the devil's back—only bring me to Warsaw."

"Hear me, hear me, my lord!" said the Jew, pulling up the cuffs of his sleeves, and stepping nearer to Boolba, with his arms thrown wide open: "We will do thus: they are now everywhere building fortresses and castles; French engineers are come from foreign lands, and for this reason many bricks and stones are carried along the highways. My lord may lie down at the bottom of the cart, and I will cover him with bricks. My lord seems strong and healthy, so he will be able to bear it, even if it does prove somewhat heavy. And I will make a hole in the cart from underneath, and will feed my lord through it."

"Do as thou wilt, only get me there."

In an hour's time a cart loaded with bricks and drawn by a pair of miserable-looking horses, was seen on its way out of Ooman. On the back of one of the horses rode the tall Yankel, the jolting of his horse causing his long side-ringlets to wave from beneath his Jewish skull-cap, and his lanky figure making him look like the signposts which stood by the way-side.

XI.

At the time when the events which are now described took place, there were no custom officers or horse patrols on the frontiers—so that men of enterprising spirit had nothing to dread, and every one could bring with him what he chose. Even if anybody happened to search the travellers, or to inspect their luggage, he did so chiefly for his own pleasure, particularly when some part of the luggage had attractions for his eyes, and when his own arm was strong and heavy.

But the sight of bricks had attractions for none, and they passed without impediment through the great town-gate. Boolba in his narrow place of concealment could hear nothing but the noise and shouts of the coachmen. Yankel, bumping up and down on his diminutive dust-covered steed, after many turnings, went at last into a dark narrow lane, which was called the Dirty or Jewish street, because in fact it was inhabited by all the Jews of Warsaw. This lane was very much like a back yard turned inside out. The sun never seemed to come there. Wooden houses, quite black from age, with a number of poles sticking out of the windows, made the lane look still darker. At rare intervals, red brick walls might be observed here and there, but even they in many places had turned quite black. Still more rarely did a portion of some high plastered wall glimmer in the sun with a white gleam intolerable to the eyes. Everything here bore the most striking appearance—chimneys, rags, scales, broken tubs. Every one threw into the street whatever was of no use to him, and the passers-by had every opportunity of finding employment for all their senses in the midst of this rubbish. The rider on his horse could often almost reach with his hand the poles which stuck across the street from one house to the other, and on which hung Jewish stockings, short trowsers, or a smoked goose. At times might be seen at some decayed window the face of a pretty Jewess, her head adorned with discoloured false pearls; a crowd of curly-headed Jewish boys, dirty and ragged, screamed and rolled in the mud. A redhaired Jew, with a face all covered with freckles, which made it resemble a sparrow's egg, looked

out of a window, and began at once to talk with Yankel in his unintelligible gibberish, and Yankel presently drove into a yard. Another Jew going along the street, stopped and also entered into the conversation, and when Boolba at last crawled from under the bricks, he saw three Jews who were talking with great vehemence.

Yankel addressed him, saying that everything should be done, that his Ostap was now lying in prison, and that, though it would be difficult to prevail upon the sentries, yet he hoped to obtain an interview for him.

Boolba entered the room together with the three Jews. They began again to speak in their unintelligible language. Tarass looked by turns at each of them. He seemed to labour under some strong excitement; his hard indifferent features seemed to light up with some unusual flame of hope, of that hope which sometimes enters the heart of him who is reduced to the lowest degree of despair. His old heart beat high, like that of a young man.

"Hear me, Jews!" said he, and his voice had something enthusiastic in it, "you can do everything, you can find anything, be it from under the bottom of the sea; and even the proverb has long ago told us that a Jew can steal his own self, if he only chooses to steal. Set me my Ostap free! give him the opportunity of escaping from the hands of these incarnate devils. Here is the man to whom I have promised twelve thousand ducats—twelve thousand more do I give now; I will give you all the costly cups, all the gold that I have hidden underground, my own house, my coat from my back—all do I give unto you; and I will make a covenant with you for all my life long that you shall have half of whatever I acquire in war!"

"Oh! impossible, my dear lord! 'tis impossible!" said Yankel, with a sigh.

"No, no, it is impossible!" said the other Jews.

The three Jews looked at each other.

"Let us, nevertheless, try it," said the third, timorously peering into the faces of the others; "may be Heaven will help us."

The three Jews again began talking in the Jewish tongue. Boolba in vain endeavoured to catch the meaning of their speech, he could only hear the word "Mardokhaï" often repeated, but could make out nothing more.

"Hear me, my lord!" said Yankel; "we must have the advice of a man the like of whom has never yet been in the world. Oh! oh! he is as wise as Solomon; and if he can do nothing, nobody on earth can. Stay here! there's the key, and let none enter."

The Jews went out into the street.

Tarass shut the door, and looked through the window into the dirty Jewish lane. The three Jews stopped in the very middle of the street, and began talking with great vehemence. They were soon joined by a fourth, then by a fifth. Tarass heard them again repeat "Mardokhaï! Mardokhaï!" The Jews every moment looked towards one end of the street; at last there was seen emerging from a decayed house a foot in a Jewish slipper; then came fluttering the skirts of a coat. "Ah, Mardokhaï, Mardokhaï!" A thin Jew, a little shorter than Yankel, but with many more wrinkles on his face, with an enormous upper lip, came near the impatient group; and every one of the Jews hastened to give him information. During the narrative, Mardokhaï looked repeatedly up towards the small window, and Tarass guessed that they were speaking about him. Mardokhaï waved his hands in the most violent manner, listened to what others said, stopped them in their speech, frequently spat aside, and lifting up the skirts of his long coat, thrust his hand into his pocket, and produced from it some rubbish, in doing which he exposed to view his disgustingly dirty trowsers. At last, all the Jews got to screaming so loudly that the Jew who stood

on the watch had to give them repeated signals to be quieter, and Tarass began to fear for his safety; but he was soon tranquillised by the thought that Jews can nowhere hold their discourse but in the open street, and that the Devil himself could not understand their gibberish.

About two minutes later all the Jews came up together into his room. Mardokhaï approached Tarass, gently slapped him on the shoulder, and said, "If we are willing to do a thing, well then, that thing shall be done as we wish it to be done."

Tarass looked at the Solomon, the like of whom had never yet been in the world, and felt some hope. In fact, the appearance of the Jew was calculated to inspire confidence. His upper lip was of frightful dimensions, there could be no doubt that its thickness had been increased by particular reasons. The Solomon's beard boasted no more than some fifteen hairs, and those were on the left side only. The Solomon's features bore such numerous traces of blows received for his tricks, that he certainly had long ceased counting them, and had grown accustomed to take them for moles.

Mardokhaï left the room with his comrades, who were full of astonishment at his wisdom. Boolba remained alone, he felt a strange sensation, till then unknown to him; for the first time in his life he experienced anxiety. His heart beat feverishly—he was no more the Boolba of old, undaunted, steady, and strong as an oak; he had grown pusillanimous, he had grown weak. He shuddered at every noise, at the sight of every new Jewish figure, making its appearance at the end of the street. Thus did he feel all the day long, he neither ate nor drank, and not for one minute did he remove his eyes from the small window which looked into the street. At last at a late hour in the evening, came Mardokhaï and Yankel. Tarass felt his heart sink within him.

"What now? did you succeed?" asked he, with the impatience of a wild horse.

But even before the Jews had collected their senses to give him an answer, Tarass noticed that Mardokhaï had no longer his last temple-lock, which, though dirty, had yet before curled in ringlets from beneath his cap. It was to be seen that he had something to communicate, but he talked so incoherently that Tarass could not understand a word. Yankel, too, was every moment pressing his hand to his mouth, as if suffering from a bad cold.

"Oh? my dear lord," said Yankel, "now it is impossible; by Heavens, impossible! The people there are so very bad, that one ought to spit upon their very heads. Here, I take Mardokhaï to witness: Mardokhaï did what no man has yet done in this world; but Heaven forbids it to be as we wish. There are three thousand soldiers Under arms, and to-morrow the execution is to take place."

Tarass gazed steadfastly into the faces of the Jews; but no anger, no impatience was any—longer in his look.

"If my lord still wishes to see his son, the interview must take place to-morrow, early in the morning, before sunrise; the sentries have given their assent, and one of the officers has agreed to it. But may they know no happiness in the next world! Woe is me! what grasping people they are! there are none such, even among us! To every one of the sentries have I given fifty ducats, and to the officer"—

"Be it so; take me to him;" said Tarass, resolutely, and all his firmness at once returned to his heart. He assented to Yankel's proposal of assuming the dress of a German count; the dress being already brought by the far-seeing Jew.

It was now night. The master of the house—the above-mentioned red-haired freckly-faced Jew — produced a thin mattress, covered with a mat, and stretched it for Boolba on a bench. Yankel lay on the floor on a similar mattress. The redhaired Jew drank a small cup of some infusion, took off his coat, and, after having presented in his stockings and slippers an appearance something like that of a chicken, went with his Jewess into a kind of closet. Two Jewish boys lay down on the floor near the

closet, as if they had been puppies. But Tarass slept not; he remained motionless, drumming on the table with his fingers. He had his pipe in his mouth, and puffed away the smoke, which made the Jew sneeze in his slumbers, and bury his nose under his coverlet. Scarcely was the sky tinted by the first pale gleam of the morning dawn, when Tarass pushed Yankel with his foot.

"Up, Jew! give me thy count's dress!"

He was dressed in no time; he blackened his mustachios and eyebrows, put a small dark-coloured cap on his head—and none of his most intimate Cossacks could have recognised him. To look at him, he seemed to be not more than thirty-five years old. The flush of health was on his cheeks, and even the scars on his face gave an expression of authority to his features. The dress, adorned with gold, became him greatly.

The city still slept. No trading chapman, basket in hand, had yet made his appearance in the town. Boolba and Yankel came to a building which bore great resemblance to a sitting heron. It was low, wide, bulky, black; and on one side rose, like a stork's neck, a long narrow turret, beyond the top of which the roof projected. This building served many and various purposes. Here were the barracks, the prison, and even the criminal courts. Our travellers entered the gate, and found themselves in a large hall, or, rather, in a covered yard. There were nearly a thousand men sleeping here together. Straight on, was a low door, before which were sitting two sentries, who were playing at a game which consisted in one of them slapping the other with two fingers on the palm of the hand. The sentries paid no attention to the new-comers, and only turned their heads when Yankel said to them, "It's we, your worships! you hear, it's we!"

"Go!" said one of the sentries, opening the door with one hand, while he presented the other to receive the strokes of his comrade.

They stepped into a dark narrow passage, which brought them to another hall like the first, receiving its light from a small window in the roof. "Who goes there?" cried several voices at once; and Tarass beheld a great number of soldiers, armed cap-a-pie. "We cannot let any one pass."

"It's we!" cried Yank el; "by Heavens, your worships, it's we!" But nobody would listen to him. Fortunately, at this moment, a fat man approached, who, by his appearance, seemed to be the chief, for he used the most abusive language to the others.

"My lord, it's we; you already know all about us; and his lordship, the count, will thank you still more."

"Let them go; and a hundred devils to the fiend's mother! Let no one else pass, do not take off your swords, and do not, any of you, dare to roll on the floor like dogs."

The continuation of the eloquent order was lost to our travellers. "It's we; it's I; we are yours!" said Yankel to every one whom he met.

"May we go in?" he asked, of one of the sentries, as they came at last to the end of the passage.

"Yes, you may; but I do not know if you are allowed to pass into the gaol. Jan is no longer on duty, there is another one there now," answered the sentry.

"Ah! ah!" muttered the Jew; "this looks bad, my dear lord!"

"Go on," said Tarass, in a stubborn voice. The Jew obeyed.

At the door of a dungeon stood a heyduke,[41] with mustachios, separated into three different stories: the upper story went backwards, the middle one straight forwards, and the last downwards, which gave the heyduke very nearly the appearance of a cat.

The Jew bent his back as much as he could, and came near him, stealing along sideways. "Your

lordship! my gracious lord!"

"Dost thou speak to me, Jew?"

"To you, gracious lord!"

"Ahem!—and I am nothing but a heyduke," said the thrice-mustachioed face, with eyes glittering with delight.

"By Heavens! I took you for the Voevoda himself! really now, I did." And the Jew began to shake his head and to stretch out his fingers. "Ah! what an air of importance! By Heavens! the air of a colonel, quite a colonel! A hair's breadth more, and it would be a colonel's. Your worship ought only to mount a horse as swift as a fly, and command regiments!"

The heyduke curled the nether story of his mustachios, and his eye assumed quite an expression of gaiety.

"What a set of men you military men are," continued the Jew. "Oh dear me! what a good set of men. And the braidings and the facings—all these make them glitter like the sun! The girls, as soon as they behold a military man—ah! ah!" And the Jew again shook his head.

The heyduke curled his upper mustachios, and gave vent to a sound something like the neighing of a horse.

"Will my lord grant me a favour?" said the Jew. "Here is a prince, come from foreign lands, who wishes to look at the Cossacks. He has never yet, as long as he has lived, seen what kind of men these Cossacks are."

The arrival of foreign counts and barons was no uncommon thing in Poland. They were frequently attracted, merely by curiosity, to see this almost half-Asiatic corner of Europe—Muscovy and Ukraine being then reputed to form part of Asia. So the heyduke, after making a respectful bow, thought fit to add some words of his own accord.

"I do not know, your grace, what you want to look at them for," said he; "they are not men, but dogs. Their creed, even, is such a one that nobody respects it."

"Thou liest! devil's son!" exclaimed Boolba. "Thou art a dog thyself! How darest thou say that no one respects our creed? It is your heretical creed that nobody respects!"

"Eh! my friend!" said the heyduke: "I see what thou art; thou art thyself one of those that I have under my charge. Wait a bit; I'll just call my comrades."

Tarass now saw his imprudence; but, stubborn and angry as he felt, he did not think about the manner of correcting it. Happily, Yank el interposed at this juncture.

"Most gracious lord! how is it possible that a count can be a Cossack? and were he a Cossack, how could he have procured such a dress, and have such a count's appearance?"

"Have done with thy tales!" And already had the heyduke opened his wide mouth in order to give the alarm.

"Your kingly majesty, be silent! in God's name be silent!" cried Yankel. "Be silent, and we will pay you as you have never yet thought of being paid: we will give you two golden ducats!"

"Hem! two ducats! Two ducats are nothing to me. I give as much as that to my barber for shaving only half my beard. A hundred ducats must thou give me, Jew!" and the heyduke curled his upper mustachios. "And if thou givest them not, I will call at once."

"So much as that, indeed?" said the trembling Jew, sorrowfully, untying his leathern purse. He was

fortunate in not having more in his purse, and in the heyduke not being able to count beyond a hundred.

"Come, my lord, let us be gone quickly. You see what a bad set of men they are here," said Yankel, seeing the heyduke was turning the money over in his hand, as if regretting he had not asked more.

"How now? devil's heyduke!" said Boolba. "Thou hast taken the money, and dost not think to let us in? Thou must do it now; if thou hast once received the money, thou canst no longer give us a refusal."

"Begone, begone to the devil! or I will at once make thee known, and then, beware! Away with you, I tell you!"

"Come, my lord, in Heaven's name come. Woe to them! May they have such dreams as shall make them spit!" urged poor Yankel.

Slowly, with drooping head, did Boolba turn back and retrace his steps, with Yankel worrying him with reproaches at the sorrowful recollection of the uselessly spent ducats.

"What need had you to answer them? Why not let the dog bark? They are people who cannot remain without scolding! Oh, woe is me! how lucky some men are! A hundred ducats, merely for driving us away! And look at us, we may have our temple-locks torn off, we may have our faces so disfigured that none will look at us, and nobody will give us a hundred ducats! Heavens! merciful Heavens!"

But the miscarriage of his design had a much greater influence on Boolba: a devouring flame streamed from his eyes.

"Come," said he, suddenly, as if recollecting himself, "let us go to the execution; I will see how they torture him."

"What is the use of going, my lord? we cannot help him."

"Let us go," said Boolba, stubbornly, and the Jew, like a nurse, reluctantly followed him.

The square, on which the execution was to take place could easily be found; crowds were flocking there from all parts. At that rude epoch an execution was one of the most attractive sights, not only for the rabble, but also for the highest classes of society. Many of the most pious old women, many of the most timid young girls and ladies, would never let an execution take place without indulging their curiosity, although they might afterwards, all night long, dream of nothing but bloody corpses, and shriek in their slumbers as loudly as a tipsy hussar. "Ah! what torments!" cried many in hysterics, hiding their eyes and turning away, but, nevertheless, remaining a long time. Some with mouth wide open and outstretched arms, would have jumped on the heads of the rest in order to have a better view.Amongst the crowd of small narrow ordinary heads, might be noticed the fat features of a butcher, who looked at all the proceedings with the air of aamateur, and conversed in monosyllables with an armourer whom he called his kinsman, because he used to get tipsy with him on feast days at the same brandy-shop. Some vehemently debated the matter, some even betted, but the greater part was composed of those who stare at the world and at everything that happens in the world, picking their noses with their fingers. In the foreground, next to the mustachioed soldiers who formed the town guard, stood a young gentleman—or one who gave himself the airs of a gentleman—in a military dress; he had put on everything which he possessed, so as to leave at his lodgings nothing but a ragged shirt and a pair of worn-out boots. Two chains, one above the other, hung round his neck, supporting a locket. He stood next to his sweetheart, Youzyssa, and every moment turned round to see that nobody soiled her silk dress.He had explained to her absolutely everything, so that there was decidedly nothing more left to explain. "There, my soul, Youzyssa," he said, "the people that you see here are come to look at the execution of the criminals. And there, my soul, the man whom you see holding a hatchet and other implements in his hand, is the executioner, and he will perform the execution. And as long as he shall break the criminal upon the wheel and otherwise torture him, the criminal will still be alive; but as

soon as he shall behead him, the criminal will be alive no longer. At first, my soul, he will cry out and move, but as soon as he shall be beheaded, he will no longer be able either to cry, or to eat, or to drink, because, my soul, he will no longer have his head, my soul." And Youzyssa listened to all, with awe and curiosity.The roofs of the houses were crowded with people. Strange faces with mustachios, and with something like bonnets on their heads, looked out from dormer windows. On the balconies, under shades, were sitting the aristocracy. The pretty hand of some laughing dashing lady was leaning on the balustrade. Stout lords were looking very important. A lackey, richly attired, with sleeves thrown over his back, was carrying about refreshments. Often did some black-eyed lively damsel take in her white hand some dainties and fruits, and throw them among the people beneath. A crowd of hungry gentlemen lifted their caps to catch them, and some tall officer, with his head rising above his neighbours', in a faded red coat and worn-out trimming, succeeded, thanks to his long arms, in catching the booty, kissed it, pressed it to his heart,and put it into his mouth. A falcon in a gilded cage, hanging under the balcony, was also one of the spectators; with head bent on one side and one leg raised, he, too, was engaged in looking at the people. On a sudden a rumour ran through the crowd, and on all sides voices were heard, "They are coming, the Cossacks are coming!"

Their heads, with long crown-locks, were bare, their beards were unshaven. They walked neither timorously nor sorrowfully, but with an air of haughty calmness; their dresses, made of fine cloth, were worn out and falling to rags; they did not look round, and did not bow to the people. In front of all came Ostap. What were the feelings of old Tarass as he saw his Ostap? What was passing in his heart? He looked at him from among the crowd, and watched his every movement. The Cossacks came near the scaffold. Ostap stopped. He was to be the first to drink the bitter cup. He looked at his comrades, raised his arm, and said, in a loud voice, "God grant that none of the heretics here present may hear, miscreants as they are, the sufferings of Christians! May none of us utter a single word!" and he mounted the scaffold.

"Well done, my son, well done!" slowly muttered Boolba, and cast down his gray head.

The executioner tore away from Ostap the old rags that covered him; he tied his hands and feet to stocks made on purpose—but why should the reader be distressed by a description, which would make his hair stand on end, of the hellish tortures? They were the creation of those hard cruel times when man knew no other life but the bloody life of warlike feats, which hardened his heart and drove from it every human feeling. In vain some men, the few exceptions of that epoch, opposed those dreadful measures. In vain did the king and several knights, enlightened both in mind and heart, remonstrate that this cruelty in punishment would but aggravate the revengefulness of the Cossacks. The royal power and the authority of wise counsels were not proof against the anarchy and the audacious self-will of the state magnates who, with their recklessness, their inconceivable want of foresight, their childish vanity, and their absurd ostentation, made the Sseim[42] a mere satire on self-government.

Ostap bore the torments and the tortures like a giant. Not a cry, not a groan was heard; even when they began to break the bones in his hands and feet, when their dreadful crunching was heard amidst the dead silence of the crowd by the remotest spectators, when the ladies averted their eyes, even then nothing like a moan escaped his lips; no feature of his face moved. Tarass stood in the crowd, with bowed head, and from time to time, proudly raising his eyes, said approvingly, "Well done, son, well done!"

But when Ostap was brought to the last torments of death, his strength seemed to give way. He looked round. Gracious God! All unknown! all strangers' faces! Had there been but one of his kin present! He wished not to listen to the wailings and the sorrow of a weak mother, or to the insane sobs of a wife, tearing her hair and beating her bosom; he wished to have looked now at a firm man, whose wise word might have brought him fresh strength and solace before death. And his strength failed him, and he cried in the agony of his heart, "Father, where art thou? couldst thou but hear me!"

"I hear!" resounded through the general stillness, and all the thousands of people shuddered at the voice. A party of cavalry-soldiers rushed to make search among the crowds of people. Yankel turned pale as death, and when the riders had ridden past him, he looked back in amazement to see Tarass, but Tarass was no longer near him, no trace of him was left!

XII.

Traces of Tarass were soon found. A hundred and twenty thousand Cossacks made their appearance on the frontiers of Ukraine. It was no longer a small marauding party come in search of booty, or a detachment in pursuit of Tartars. Not so: it was the whole of the nation which had risen at once, because its patience was at an end. It had risen to avenge the derision of its rights, the shameful humiliation of its customs, the insults inflicted upon the creed of its fathers, and upon the holy rites, the disgrace of its church, the licentiousness of foreign lords, the Union,[43] the shameful dominion of Jews in a Christian country, and all that had so long consolidated and ripened the stern hatred of the Cossacks. The young but spirited hetman, Astranitza, was the leader of the whole Cossack army. He was accompanied by his old and experienced comrade and councillor Ploonia. Eight colonels led regiments, each twelve thousand strong. Two general essaools and the general boonchook[44] bearer followed the hetman. The general banner bearer escorted the great banner; many more banners and standards floated in the distance behind; the lieutenants of the boonchook bearer escorted the boonchooks. There were many other officials, leaders of waggons, lieutenants of regiments, and secretaries, and with them infantry and cavalry regiments; moreover, the number of volunteers was nearly as great as that of the registered Cossacks. From every side had the Cossacks risen, from all the towns of Little Russia, from the western as well as from the eastern part of the Dnieper, and from all its islands. Horses and waggons without number crossed the plains. And among all these Cossacks, among all these eight regiments, one regiment was the choicest—this regiment was led by Tarass Boolba. Everything gave him precedence over the others—his old age, his experience, his skill in leading his troops, and his inveterate hatred of the foe. Even the Cossacks thought his unsparing cruelty and ferocity too excessive. His gray head adjudged nothing but fire and gallows, and nothing but destruction did he advise in the councils of war.

It would he useless to relate all the battles where the Cossacks gained distinction, or the gradual progress of the war; all this has found its place in the pages of our annals. It is well known what, in Russia, a war begun for the Faith signifies. No power is stronger than that of the Faith. Unconquerable and terrible, it is like the rock in the midst of a stormy ever-changing sea. Formed of one single massive stone, it raises to the sky its indestructible walls from the very centre of the bottom of the sea. From every point it may be seen looking full on the passing waves. And woe to the ship that is cast upon it! Its fragile masts will fly to splinters, all those upon it are crushed and precipitated into the depths of the ocean, and far away the air resounds with the shrieks of its drowning sailors!

The annals minutely record how the Polish garrisons fled from the towns liberated by the Cossacks; how the rapacious Jew farmers were hanged; how weak the opposition was of the Polish hetman, Nicholas Potozki, with his numerous army against the unconquerable forces of the Cossacks; how, after being defeated and pursued, he let the best part of his army perish in a small stream; how he was surrounded by the dreaded Cossack regiments in the small borough of Polonnoie; and how, brought to extremity, he took his oath to the complete redress of all grievances, and the surrender of all former rights and privileges, in the name of the king and of the ministers of state. But the Cossacks were not men to be deceived, they knew what the oath of a Pole is worth; and never again would Potozki have ridden on his costly steed, attracting the looks of illustrious ladies, and making himself the envy of the

nobility—never again would he have set the Sseim in an uproar, and have given rich feasts to the senators—had not the Russian clergy of the borough interposed on his behalf. As the priests came forward in the brilliant cassocks of cloth of gold, bearing crosses and holy images, and as the bishop himself appeared in front of them in his pontifical mitre, holding a crucifix in his hand, all the Cossacks bowed their heads and took off their caps. Nobody, no, not even the king would they have spared at that moment, but they dared not oppose the dignitaries of the Christian church, so they obeyed the summons of the clergy. The hetman and the colonels consented to let Potozki go free, having made him promise upon oath that freedom should be granted to all the Christian churches, that the old enmity should be brought to an end, and that no offence should be offered to the Cossack army. One colonel alone did not give his assent to such a peace as this. Tarass was that one. He tore a lock of hair from his head and cried aloud:—

"Eh! hetman and colonels! Do not do such a woman's act! Do not give credence to the Poles. The cursed dogs will betray you!"

But when the army secretary presented the act of treaty, and the hetman put his sign-manual to it, Tarass took off his rich Turkish sabre, a fine blade of highly-tempered steel, broke it in two pieces like a reed, and throwing far away both fragments, one on each side, exclaimed, "Fare ye well, then! As these two fragments shall never meet and form one single blade any more, so shall we, comrades, never meet again in this world! Remember ye my parting words!" and his voice grew stronger, rose higher, assumed an unknown power, and all felt perplexed at the prophetic words. "You will remember me at the hour of your death! You think to have purchased quietness and peace; you think you may now play the lords. There is another lordship in store for you; hetman, thou shalt have the skin torn from thy head, thou shalt have it stuffed with groats, and long shall it be made a show in fairs! And you, gentlemen, neither will you keep your heads on your shoulders. In damp dungeons, behind stone walls will you perish, if you are not, like sheep, boiled alive in cauldrons.[45] And you, children," continued he, turning round to his Cossacks, "Which of you wishes to die a natural death—not on stoves and on women's beds, not lying drunk under a hedge near the brandy-shop like carrion, but to die the honourable death of Cossacks, all of us on one bed, like bride and bridegroom? Or, may be you wish to return home to turn heretics and carry about Polish parsons on your backs?"

"We follow thee, our lord and colonel, we follow thee!" cried all who were in Tarass's regiment, and many more went over to them.

"If so, then be it so," said Tarass, and he pulled his cap over his brow, menacingly looked at those he left behind, settled himself in his saddle, and cried to his followers: "Let nobody offend us with insulting words. And now, children, let us go and pay our visit to the Papists!" and he slashed his horse. A train of a hundred waggons followed him, and numerous were the Cossacks, both on horseback and on foot, who went after him. Turning back his head, he looked with threatening and with anger at those who remained behind. None dared to stop him. In sight of the whole army, his regiment marched away, and many times did Tarass turn back and menace with his looks.

The hetman and the colonels stood perplexed; all were thoughtful, and long did they remain silent, oppressed by some gloomy foreboding. The words of Tarass did not pass away: everything happened as he had foretold. In a short time the hetman and the chief dignitaries fell victims to the treachery of the Poles, and their heads were stuck on pikes.

And what did Tarass in the mean time? Tarass crossed all Poland in every direction with his regiment, gave to the flames eighteen boroughs, nearly forty Popish churches, and had even come near Kracow. Many were the nobles whom he put to the sword; the richest and finest castles were plundered by him; his Cossacks found out and poured on the ground wines and meads which had been for centuries preserved in the cellars of the Polish lords; they chopped to pieces and burnt the rich stuffs, dresses,

and furniture which they found in the storehouses. "No mercy!" repeated Tarass. And no mercy did the Cossacks show to the dark-eyebrowed ladies, to the white-bosomed pretty-faced girls, even at the altar could they find no safety; Tarass burned them with the altars. Many snow-white hands were seen raised to the sky from out of the midst of the flames, and many were the shrieks which would have made the ground tremble and the very grass bend down to the earth in compassion. But nothing softened the cruelty of the Cossacks, and, lifting on their spears the infants whom they found in the streets, they cast them also into the flames. "This is my revenge for Ostap, cursed Poles!" said Tarass, and he took his revenge in every borough: so that the Polish government saw at length that the exploits of Tarass were not merely the acts of a robber, and the same Potozki with five regiments was intrusted with the task of taking him.

For six days did the Cossacks escape by bye-ways from the pursuit. Their horses could hardly bear the rapidity of their flight and save them from their pursuers, but Potozki this time proved worthy of his charge; unweariedly did he pursue them, and he overtook them at last on the banks of the Dniester, where Boolba had paused for rest in an abandoned ruined fortress. The dismantled walls of this fortress and its crumbling keep, stood on a steep cliff above the Dniester. Its platform, paved with stones and fragments of bricks, seemed to be ready at any moment to tumble down and roll into the river. Here it was that the hetman Potozki, encamping on the two sides which were adjacent to fields, surrounded the Cossacks. For four days did the Cossacks keep their stand, fighting and rolling down stones and bricks on the assailants. At last,their strength and their provisions were exhausted, and Tarass resolved to cut his way through the ranks of the enemy. Already had the Cossacks traversed the ranks, and they might perhaps once more have owed their escape to the swiftness of their horses, when on a sudden, in the very heat of their flight, Tarass stopped and cried out, "Stay, I have dropped my pipe, not even my pipe shall the cursed Poles have!" and the old Ataman stooped and began to seek in the grass for his pipe, his never-failing companion over sea and land, in his campaigns and in his home. Meanwhile a whole crowd rushed at once upon him and took him by his shoulders. He endeavoured to shake all his limbs, but no longer as of old did the heydukes fall down around him. "Eh, old age, old age!" said he, and the stout old Cossack began to weep.But his age was not the cause of it, strength had got the better of strength. Nearly thirty soldiers hung about his arms and legs. "The crow is caught," shrieked the Poles, "let us find out the best mode of paying homage to the dog!" And with the hetman's assent they decided on burning him alive, in sight of all. There stood near at hand a dry tree, whose top had been struck by lightning. Tarass was bound with iron chains to the trunk of this tree, his hands were nailed to it, and he was raised on high, in order that from everywhere around the Cossack might be seen. Beneath they made a pile of faggots. But Tarass paid no attention to the pile, he did not think about the fire that was to burn him, he looked, poor old fellow, to where the Cossacks were seen fighting;from the height to which he had been lifted he could distinctly see everything. "Lads," cried he, "quick, reach the hill behind the wood, they will not overtake you there!" But the wind blew his words away. "They will perish, perish for nothing!" exclaimed he, in despair; and he gazed down on the Dniester, glittering below. Delight flashed in his eyes. He saw the prows of four boats, projecting out of the bushes, and gathering all the strength of his lungs, he shouted at the top of his voice, "To the shore, lads, to the shore! take the cliff path on your left. Near the shore are boats, take them all to prevent pursuit." The wind this time blew from another quarter, and every word was heard by the Cossacks. But this advice cost Boolba a stroke on his head, which made everything swim before his eyes.

The Cossacks galloped at the utmost speed of their horses to the cliff path, the pursuers were close at hand; and behold, there lies the cliff path curling round in zig-zags. "Well, comrades, let us take our chance," said they; then they stopped for a moment, lifted their whips, gave a whistle, and their Tartar horses, springing from the ground, stretched themselves like snakes in the air, flew over the abyss, and leaped straight into the Dniester. Only two riders missed the river, fell on the rocks and remained there for ever with their steeds, not having had even time to utter a shriek. And the Cossacks were already

swimming with their horses and loosening the boats. The Poles stopped before the precipice, astounded at the unheard-of Cossack feat, and arguing whether they would jump or not? One young colonel,with hot boiling blood in his veins, the brother of the Polish beauty who had bewitched poor Andrew, did not remain long thinking, he leaped at once after the Cossacks. Thrice did he wheel round and round in the air with his horse, and fell upon the rocks. Tom to pieces by their sharp points, he disappeared in the abyss, and his brains, mingled with blood, splashed the bushes which grew on the uneven sides of the chasm.

When Tarass Boolba recovered from the blow, and looked on the Dniester, the Cossacks were already in the boats and rowing; bullets after bullets flew from above, but did not reach them. And the eyes of the old Ataman gleamed with joy.

"Fare ye well, comrades!" cried he to them; "Remember me and fail not to return here next spring and enjoy yourselves. How now, devil's Poles? do you think there is anything in the world than can affright a Cossack? Wait a bit; the time is coming when you shall know what the Russian faith is! Already do nations far and near forebode it. There shall arise a Czar in Russia, and there shall be no power on earth that shall not yield to his power"—

Meanwhile the flames rose from the pile and scorched his feet, and spread over the tree—but here in the world such flames, such torments, power as can overcome the strength of a Russian?

No small river is the Dniester, many are its inlets, its thick grown reeds, its shallows, and its gulfs. Its mirror-like surface glitters, re-echoing the ringing screams of the swans which proudly swim on its stream. Many are the divers coloured birds that dwell in its reeds and on its banks.

The Cossacks sailed fast in their two-ruddered boats, the oars splashed with measured stroke; they warily avoided the shoals, scaring the birds, and talked of their Ataman.

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[1]The meads of Little Russia, Lithuania, and Poland are renowned for their flavour, which, like that of some wines, increases with being kept. They are very strong and act especially on the legs, so that sometimes a glass of mead is sufficient to deprive the most experienced drinker of the use of his legs, although his head may remain perfectly clear. Some ascribe the fact of so many Poles suffering from gout to nothing more than the immoderate use of mead.

[2]A sort of guitar peculiar to Little Russia.

[3]Union, in the Russian acceptation of the term, means the mixed religion, uniting the rites of the Greek Church with the dogmas of Popery, which was enforced by Poland upon Little Russia and Lithuania, and which gave the Poles occasion to commit the most abominable cruelties on the adherents of the Greek Church, and roused the vengeance of the latter. A correct and most strictly true picture of those struggles is to be found in this tale.

[4]A rank in Russian irregular troops corresponding to that of captain or commander of a company.

[5]The above-mentioned college was placed under the orders of an abbot, and the professors and tutors in it were monks.

[6]Formerly Saturday was a dreaded day in Russian schools. Every pupil received on the evening of that day a severe flogging—the bad pupils as a punishment for their past misdeeds and laziness, the good ones as a foretaste of what awaited them in case of their altering their conduct. Some strange notion existed of accustoming the pupils to endure bodily pain, and of giving a periodical impulse to the circulation of their blood, and this had some connection with the barbarous system.

[7]A cossackin means a Cossack's dress, which is a coat fastened by hooks down the middle of the

breast, and fitting closely to the figure. It is furnished with skirts which never descend lower than the knee.

[8]This is a Russian custom still observed. Before a departure every one present sits down for a minute or two in silence; then all rise at once, making the sign of the cross, and invoking the protection of Heaven on the intended travellers.

[9]Voevoda, governor of a city or province.

[10]The pupils intrusted to the care of the consuls (or elder pupils).

[11]A species of guitar.

[12]: A verst is about two-thirds of an English mile.

[13]Dwellings.

[14]Rada, general assembly of the Cossacks, in which every one had a voice, and which was summoned on important occasions, such as declaration of war, conclusion of peace, or the election of the koschevoï ataman, supreme head of the Zaporoghian commonwealth.

[15]Supreme chief of the Zaporoghian Ssiecha.

[16]The elective chief of the kooren, subordinate to the Koschevoï Ataman.

[17]General assembly or council.

[18]Different sorts of guitars, common in Little Russia.

[19]The Russians adorn their church images with metallic (i.e., copper, silver, and golden) covers, which reproduce, in basso-relievo, the painting which is placed under them, and of which nothing but the flesh parts of the painted saint (i.e. the face, the arms, hands, and sometimes the feet) are left visible. Some of the metallic cloths, as they are called, are very heavy and costly; upon some of them may be seen precious stones of great value.

[20]That is, in the western part of Little Russia, subjected to Poland and governed by an elective prince (hetman), confirmed in his office by the King of Poland.

[21]These statements, as well as the subsequent, are strictly historical. The vexations inflicted by Polish lords upon persons professing the Russian-Greek faith—not only at the times spoken of in this tale, but even within the present century—account sufficiently for the inveterate and indelible hatred with which Russians look upon Poles.

[22]Truly historical.

[23]The costume of the Polish Jews consists of a coat which goes down to the heels. On their feet they usually wear slippers. Their head is covered with a closely fitting skull cap, from beneath which on either side hands a long lock of hair which, together with their beard and mustachios, form the sanctum sanctorum of their persona.

[24]Common people in Russia, even now, use no socks or stockings; but strips of linen, in which they wrap their feet.

[25]A proverbial expression still used by Russians.

[26]Voevoda—governor of a city or province.

[27]A dish somewhat like starch, much used in Russia by the common people.

[28]The catacombs of the Peckerskoï (i.e., of the caverns) cloister at Kieff, were, like those of Rome, the places of worship and of burial of cenobites, whose relics are still preserved there by the Russians.

[29]The Polish Jewesses, when married, follow very strictly the prescription of their law to hide their hair and their ears; but, as a compensation for not showing their beautiful hair, and wearing no earrings, they wear wigs on their head, and pieces of cloth adorned with jewels over their ears.

[30]The Ssiem was one of the most incongruous phenomena of the Polish administration. Every landed proprietor had a voice in this assembly, which was convoked on every important occasion: such as the election of a king, the declaration of war, the conclusion of peace, &c., &c. The veto of a single member was, de jure, sufficient to put a stop to any political or administrative measure proposed to these assemblies; de facto, however, the king availed himself of the support of some powerful magnates to enforce the execution of his will; but as this was only an infringement of the law, so it never failed to excite the opposition (very often, armed) of the malcontents. No wonder, then, if the Ssiems, forming the supreme constituent power in the state, brought upon Poland the miseries of which the history of that country is one long and uninterrupted story.

[31]Polish cuirassiers wore brass helmets adorned on each side with small wings, like those allotted by mythology to the travelling cap of the Greek Hermes. Some of them, also, wore large wings fastened to their cuirass behind their shoulders.

[32]The ancient fashioned Polish overcoats were put on over a sleeve coat, from Which they were distinguished by their colour, and had sleeves hanging behind the shoulders, and sometimes hooked together on the back for convenience' sake.

[33]A very frequent practice of the Turks with their Zaporoghian prisoners was, to cover them with tar and then burn them alive.

[34]The arkan of the Cossacks is like the lasso of the Mexicans—a rope with a running slip-knot, which is thrown over the object of the Cossack's chase (a wild horse or an enemy). The Caucasian mountaineers make use of the same instrument, and, like the Cossacks of yore, often drag their prisoners at their horses' heels with the knot round their neck or their waist—the other end of the arkan being tied to the saddle. This practice involuntarily reminds one of Achilles dragging the body of Hector tied to his chariot.

[35]Gentlemen Officers.

[36]The Nakaznoï or temporary Ataman was elected for ope single campaign, during which he had the full power of the Koschevoï, and at the conclusion he resigned it to the latter.

[37]In the original, there follows here a list of Cossacks' names, perfectly uninteresting: and almost unpronounceable to an English reader. In several other places they have also been omitted.

[38]Constantinople.

[39]This is a usual phrase in Russian tales of olden times, when recording the deeds of knights fighting (for the most part singly) against swarms of infidels.

[40]The Zaporoghians had their trowsers made (when they had the means to do so) of the most costly cloth, especially red, and to express their contempt of luxury, besmeared them with tar. The nagaïkas is the Cossack whip, a weapon the impression of which many a Frenchman bore on his back, after the invasion of Russia by Napoleon the Great. Its handle is not more than half a yard long, the lash, of the same length, consists of an iron wire, plaited all round with leathern thongs, terminating in a square piece of leather, about an inch in width. A blow of the nagaïka may break a bone, and a well-aimed stroke of its square end may cut out a piece of flesh.

[41]Heydukes (properly haydooks) formed a select body in the Polish army, and were recruited among the tallest and strongest men.

[42]For an account of the Sseim, see footnote 30.

[43]The introduction of Popish rites into the Greek Church.

[44]Boonchook is the name of a Turkish standard, consisting of a horse-tail nailed to a pole. The Cossacks also used them besides banners, which bore the image of the Saviour or the Virgin.

[45]All this is truly historical, and will be readily believed by any one in the least acquainted with the national character of the Poles.

FINISHED.

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