

some of the wounded gripped with fury the throats of the assassins, and in spite of the injuries they received they squeezed them till they suffocated. If one among them found a sword he sold his life dearly. Many a mercenary perished, but finally not a boyar remained alive. Forty-seven corpses lay upon the floor! In the struggle and turmoil the table was overturned; the jars were broken and the wine mixed with blood made a pool upon the boards of the hall.

Simultaneously with the murder upstairs began the massacre in the courtyard.

The boyars' servants, finding themselves set upon without warning by the soldiers, tried to flee. Only a few escaped with their lives; they succeeded in scaling the walls and gave the alarm in the boyars' homes: they called out others of the boyars' retainers and men, and roused the populace. The whole city flocked to the gates of the courtyard, which they began to destroy with axes. The soldiers, stupid with drink, made little resistance. The crowd grew stronger and stronger.

Lapushneanu, when he recognized the strength of the crowd, sent an esquire to inquire what they wished. The esquire went out.

"Well, Vornic Motzoc," he said, turning towards that person, "tell me, have I not done well to rid myself of this rabble, to free the land from this sore?"

"Your Highness has acted with great wisdom," replied the obsequious courtier; "I have long had it in my mind to advise your Highness to do this, but I see your Highness's sagacity has anticipated me, and you have done well to destroy; because--why--it was----"

"I see the esquire tarries," said Lapushneanu, cutting short Motzoc, who was becoming involved in his speech. "I think we will give orders to fire a round into the mob. Ha! what think you?"

"Certainly, certainly, let us turn the guns on them; there is not much loss in a few hundred churls dying when so many boyars have perished. Yes, let us destroy them root and branch."

"I expected just such an answer," said Lapushneanu with irritation, "but we will see first what it is they ask."

At that moment the esquire stepped through the door into the courtyard, and making a sign, cried:

"Good people! His Highness sends to inquire what it is you want and ask, and wherefore you are come with so much noise?"

The crowd stood open-mouthed. They had not expected such a question. They had come without knowing why, or what they wanted. They collected quietly into little groups and asked one another what it was they did want. At last they began to shout:

"Remit the taxes!" "Cease to harass us!" "Do not kill us!" "Do not rob us!" "We remain poor!" "We have no money!" "Motzoc has taken our all!" "Motzoc! Motzoc!" "He fleeces us and ruins us!" "He advises the Voda!" "Let him die!" "To death with Motzoc!" "We want the head of Motzoc!"

The last words found an echo in every heart, and were like an electric spark. All the voices rang together as one voice, and this voice cried:

"We ask for Motzoc's head!"

"What do they ask for?" asked Lapushneanu, as the esquire entered.

"The head of Vornic Motzoc," replied the esquire.

"How? What?" cried Motzoc, jumping like a man who has trodden on a serpent. "You did not hear aright, fool! You try to jest, but this is no time for jesting. What words are these! What would they do with