

the wall.

"You must render account before God," she said, sighing, "for you have caused me to commit this sin."

The Metropolitan arrived.

"Let us go," he said to the Princess.

"But who will tend to this wretched man?"

"We will," replied the boyars.

"Oh, Father, what have you made me do!" said the Princess to the Metropolitan, and she went sobbing with him.

The two boyars went into the sick man. The poison had not yet begun to do its work. Lapushneanu lay stretched out, his face uppermost, calm but very weak. When the two boyars entered, he looked at them for some time, but not recognizing them he asked who they were, and what they had to say.

"I am Stroici," replied one.

"And I am Spancioc," added the other, "and our wish is to see you before you die as we promised you."

"Oh, my enemies!" sighed Alexandru.

"I am Spancioc," continued that person, "Spancioc whom you would fain have beheaded when you murdered the forty-seven boyars, and who escaped from your clutches! Spancioc, whose property you have destroyed leaving his wife and children to beg for alms at the doors of Christian houses."

"Ah, I feel as though a fire burnt me!" cried the sick man, grasping his stomach with both hands.

"To-day we free ourselves, for you must die. The poison works."

"Oh, you have poisoned me, infamous creatures! Oh, what a fire! Where is the Princess? Where is my son?"

"They have gone away and left you to us."

"They have gone away and left me! Have left me to you! Oh, kill me and let me escape from suffering. Oh, stab me, you are still young, have pity, free me from the agony that rends me, stab me!" he said, and turned towards Stroici.

"I will not desecrate my noble dagger with the blood of such a worthless tyrant as you."

The pains increased. The poisoned man writhed in convulsions.

"Oh," he cried, "my very soul burns me! Oh, give me water--give me something to drink."

"Look," said Spancioc, taking the silver cup from the table, "the dregs of the poison are left. Drink and quench your thirst!"

"Nay, nay, I will not," said the sick man, setting his teeth.

Then Stroici seized him and held him tight while Spancioc, drawing a knife from its sheath, unclenched his teeth with its point and poured down his throat the poison which had remained at the bottom of the cup.

Lapushneanu, roaring like a bull which sees the hand and axe which is about to strike him, tried to turn his face towards the wall.

"What, you do not want to see us?" said the boyars. "No, but it is