

——oh, my God, forgive me, forgive me!"

In an instant the whole situation flashed before the mind of Paul. Veda was his sister, and he must find her even though his life were at stake in the attempt, and save her from the designs of Nickolai Nataroff. As he turned to go, he caught the old thin hands once more to his breast, and looked down at the upturned face that had so suddenly become filled with a new meaning for him.

"I understand it all now," he said. "But now, Veda, my sister, my sister!"

As he hurried from her and was about to pass into the street, leaving his mother to follow him, she pointed hastily to the papers she had brought which were still lying upon the table. But he was gone before she could speak a word, and was soon out of her reach.

While yet some distance from Nickolai's place of residence, he noticed that the mob at work in that quarter and began to fear for the safety of his sister. Already he found himself jostled about by the rioters, and at times his advance was entirely checked by the mad crowd. Before him the fires burned fiercely and the mob swayed back and forth, an impenetrable mass. At last, in spite of all his struggles, he felt himself forced slowly back. He fought his way madly to a row of tall buildings that skirted the street in which the mob moved, hoping that once on the edge of the mass, he would be better able to make headway.

Scarcely had he gained this position when he thought he heard someone call him. He looked back but could distinguish no one he knew among the faces that glowed fiercely in the red light from the fires. He turned again to thread his way between the trampling crowd and the high walls when once again the same voice called to him. This time it sounded nearer, and looking quickly in the direction from which the voice came, he caught sight of a woman's face turned towards him. There was no mistaking it; he could see it plainly in the red light.

Throwing himself again into the crowd, he gained her side in a few minutes, and placing one arm about her,

he fought his way back again to the position he had just gained. Forcing her quickly into a narrow recess in the wall, he stood before her, and with all his strength held back the crowd that threatened to crush them to death. For hours he fought, his arms bruised and bleeding, and the perspiration streaming from his face.

It was early dawn before the riot was quelled and the streets cleared by military force. Not a few had been shot down by the soldiers, but many more had fallen and lay where they had been trampled to death in the streets.

In the grey light of the early day, Paul and Veda walked slowly along the streets and cast glances at the bodies that lay strewn about. To his surprise, he learned that she had long since known the secret that had been disclosed to him by his mother,——they had kept it together.

"It was near here we separated," said Veda, pausing a moment as they walked along. "When we were forced apart, I looked back and saw him struck down suddenly by a peasant with a long beard and uncovered head. Both went down before the rush, and I saw them no more."

She moved on a few yards in advance of Paul, and came to a standstill as she pressed her hands to her breast.

"Paul!" she cried softly, her gaze fixed upon the ground.

Paul approached the spot where she stood and glanced down. Three bodies lay huddled together in the street. The white face of Nickolai Nataroff was turned to the skies and his eyes held a cold stare. Lying upon his breast, his hand clutched upon Nickolai's throat, was the body of a peasant. He was old, unkempt and poorly clad. His uncovered head was bruised and bleeding, and his long heavy beard was wet and tangled. Within reach was a long staff which had been broken in two,——its service was over. Beside these, half kneeling, half sitting, and bowed forward upon the street, was the body of a woman. No marks of violence were visible upon her body, but her thin hands were pressed to her heart, and in her