

hands were clasped behind him and his head bowed low as he walked, now slowly, now briskly, from one side of the room to the other. The day throughout had been one of anxiety and trouble. Refugees, fleeing from the outrages and unmerciful lawlessness of a mob of revolutionists, had been coming to the city during the entire day with fresh tales of misery and disaster. Buildings were burned to the ground, and many occupants of burning homes had lost their lives in the flames. Helpless children were thrown from the flames by writhing, praying mothers, and hurled back again by frantic, cursing demons in the forms of men. As the mob swept forward in its efforts to carry all before it, women and children were trampled to death unnoticed beneath its feet. Old men, decrepit with age, fatigued and unable to keep pace with their mad companions, fell to their knees, cursing and praying in turns, as the blind hoard swept over them, beating the blood into their eyes, and leaving them writhing and groaning upon the ground. The wreckage strewn in the wake of such storms is horrible beyond description.

Such occurrences as these were alone the cause of sufficient anxiety to Paul in his capacity as military officer. But his anxiety was augmented almost beyond endurance by the interview he had had with Nickolai Nataroff, hitherto supposed to have been his uncle, and its unexpected conclusion.

As he paced to and fro, trying in vain to ease his confused mind, he stopped suddenly and stood listening as if he had heard some strange sound. A prolonged shout echoed from a distant part of the city. He stepped hurriedly to his window and looked out into the dark night. The clouds hanging low above the city were steeped in a red glare, the light from raging fires. Turning quickly from his window, he was about to rush from his room into the streets when a quick hurried knock sounded lightly on his door. He started back with a strange sense of fear. Something in the knocking caused him to move cautiously. Slowly he approached the door and opened it. A crouching figure stepped

quickly through the doorway, and ran about the room whining pitifully. Paul stepped back and eyed the new-comer with surprise mingled with a touch of suspicion. It was the hag.

"Oh, Paul, Paul! Quick, for your own sake and mine—come here to the light!"

She stepped quickly to the table that stood in the full light of an overhanging lamp. Taking from the folds of her shawl a tightly bound envelope that seemed full of papers, she laid it upon the table and turned to Paul, who eyed her keenly and with interest.

"Well, what is it, mother?" he asked, a little impatiently.

She moved closer to him and clasped his hand with her thin fingers.

"Ah, yes, mother, mother!" she cried, repeating the epithet by which Paul, according to the prevailing custom, had addressed her. "Come here, Paul!" and she pulled him towards the light. "Look into my eyes now, and call me mother again. Call me mother, Paul, for I am indeed your mother, and you are my son, my true son."

Paul seemed more bewildered than ever, and stood without speaking a word.

"Paul, Paul!" she cried again, and the tears began to stream from her eyes. "Look at me, Paul! I am your mother, your real mother——do you not know me? But no, how could you——you were so small then. And your father, Paul——they told me he was dead——but they lied——he is not dead——he lives, Paul, and he is here——he has come back to us. I have seen him in the streets tonight."

For an instant Paul wondered if she were mad. Then he shuddered to think that perhaps he himself was mad.

"Do you not understand me, Paul?" she persisted.

Suddenly the story which Nickolai had told him flashed before his mind. He caught her thin hands in his and looked at her enquiringly.

"Then I am not Paul Nataroff," he said slowly.

"Never!" she cried. "You are Paul Mazurink, but I sold you, I sold you