

6 THE WHITE MORNING

excellent young officer, making a trifling indisposition of her mother a pretext for escape. On the night before her departure the four girls huddled in her bed after the opera and listened to an incisive account of her brief but distasteful period of matrimony. Not that she suffered from tyranny. Quite the reverse. Of her several suitors she had cannily engineered into her father's favor a young man of pleasing appearance, good title and fortune, but quite without character behind his fierce upstanding mustache. Inheriting her father's rigid will, she had kept the young officer in a state of abject submission. She stroked his hair in public as if he had been her pet dachshund, and patted his hand at kindly intervals as had he been her dear little son.

"But Kari has the soul of a sheep," she informed the breathless trio. "You might not be so fortunate. Far, far from it. How can any one more than guess before one is fairly married and done for? Look at papa. Does he not pass in society as quite a charm-