

on it. I remember every word he said, 'that I had been his evil genius; that instead of marrying a woman he loved, he had been made to wed a pale spectre who haunted him as the White Lady who fore-shadows death in royal houses. That I hated his mother, and despised his church, but now the crisis was come. The day of doom at hand. The destinies of Russia were at stake. Swear,' he said, 'swear by God, that is, if indeed you believe there is a God—swear that you will be silent as the grave regarding the glorious delivery which is at hand. Do you value your life?' he said savagely, as I turned away from him without replying. 'Do you value your life?' he repeated, his eyes glowing with an expression of mingled hatred and fear.

"What has my life been that I should value it?' I cried, the strong sense of accumulated wrongs finding vent at last. 'What has my life been but a living death since I set foot in this detested land, since I became the bride of a savage. Give me back my own country, give me back my youth—'

"Your youth," he cried, 'your country. Cursed be the day when you came from it, and stood between me and the true wife of my heart, and threw the cold shade of your sneers and your unbelief over the faith of holy Russia. But by that faith I swear you shall come this very day to my mother's cell and hear from her lips the duty of a wife.' God forgive me! I was stung to the heart; I thought of what *that* woman had been, and of *my* patience and truth, and I murmured, will *she* teach it me.' My eyes doubtless spoke the sarcasm my lips dared not utter. He felled me to the ground. I remember the agony of the blow, I remember the look of his face, I remember my own wild cry, and then nothing more; nothing for many nights and many days.

"When I recovered my senses I was, or fancied I was, alone. Lying on a small bed in a dark, low room, I saw nothing but stained whitewashed walls, and a small table on which were some bottles, and two or three common chairs. Gradually I called to mind, with that feeble groping sense of awakening memory, *who* I was, and then with a sort of bewildered astonishment wondered *where* I was. I had spent days of misery amidst splendor and discomfort, but so poor a chamber as

this I had never even looked upon. With difficulty, and feeling faint and giddy, I raised my heavy head from the pillow, and saw M. de Sasse, sitting near the stove warming his hands, and looking very ill. 'M. de Sasse,' I whispered. He started, and hurried to my side. 'Where am I? What has happened to me?'

"You are dead," he emphatically whispered; 'that is, everybody, and the monster who killed you, thinks you are dead.' Who killed me? What monster? Ah! it all came back upon me, and I gave a fearful scream. 'Hush, hush! for heaven's sake!' implored M. de Sasse. 'Nobody must know you are alive.'

"I pressed my hand on my forehead, for my thoughts were beginning again to wander. 'Is there anybody near me but you?' I said faintly.

"The Countess of Konigsmark will be here presently. She will tell you all that has happened. Try to sleep a little again.' I closed my eyes, but I could not rest. 'Is this the world to come?' I said. 'It is like a horrid dream without a beginning or an end. Is this life or death?' Then a nervous agitation seized me, I began to tremble and to weep. The poor old man bent over me imploring me to be silent. My sobs became loud and convulsive, and his face grew wild with apprehension. He laid a pillow on my face, and cried out, 'Will you, too, murder me?' I shall never forget his groan as he dashed the pillow to the ground, and tore his grey hair. Poor, faithful old man, it was the sight of his grief which quieted me. I gave him my hand and fell asleep, I believe. The next time I woke, the Countess de Konigsmark was kneeling by the bedside; when I opened my eyes they met hers. I had known her from my earliest childhood. Her son, Comte Maurice de Saxe, had been my playfellow in former days. She was one of my few friends since my marriage. Whenever she came to the court of Russia, her society was a consolation to me. During those years of misery she was the only person to whom I opened my heart. What a relief it was to see her that day! I stretched out my arms, and she folded me to her breast.

"I like this little dark room, now that you are here," I whispered. 'I do not want to go away, if you will stay a little with me. And you, too,' I added, turn