

12 THE WHITE MORNING

with no intercourse, personal or chirographical with her family, the Head of the House of Niebuhr angrily gave his consent and sent for a sister to chaperon his girls.

The congress remained until the eve of Mariette's wedding, and she passed those six months in one of the superlatively beautiful mountain resorts of Austria. She was solitary, for the most part, and she did an excessive amount of thinking. She returned to her duties with a deep disgust of life as she knew it, a cynical contempt for women, and a profound sense of revolt. Her natural diplomacy she had increased tenfold.

When the three girls, their eyes very large, and speaking in whispers, although their father was at a yearly talk-fest with his old brothers in arms, confided to their mother their resolution never in any circumstances to adopt a household tyrant of their own, she nodded understandingly.

"Leave it to me," she said. "Your father can be managed, little as he suspects it. I'll find the weak spot in each of the suitors