

The White Morning

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THE WHITE MORNING

A Novel of the Power of the German Women in Wartime

by

GERTRUDE ATHERTON

[Illustration: GISELA _Photograph by Arnold Genthe, N.Y._]

I

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Countess Gisela Niebuhr sat in the long dusk of Munich staring over at the beautiful park that in happier days had been famous in the world as the Englischer Garten, and deliberately recalled on what might be the last night of her life the successive causes that had led to her profound dissatisfaction with her country as a woman. She was so thoroughly disgusted with it as a German that personal grievances were far from necessary to fortify her for the momentous rôle she was to play with the dawn; but in this rare hour of leisure it amused her naturally introspective mind to rehearse certain episodes whose sum had made her what she was.

When she was fourteen and her sisters Lili and Elsa sixteen and eighteen they had met in the attic of their home in Berlin one afternoon when their father was automatically at his club and their mother taking her prescribed hour of rest, and solemnly pledged one another never to marry. The causes of this vital conclave were both cumulative and immediate. Their father, the Herr Graf, a fine looking junker of sixty odd, with a roving eye and a martial air despite a corpulence which annoyed him excessively, had transferred his lost authority over his regiment to his household. The boys were in their own regiments and rid of parental discipline, but the countess and the girls received the full benefit of his military, and Prussian, relish for