

Marie Spiridonova

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The outraged flesh. The mind in anguish burning,
The brave eyes closed in deep excess of pain,
The young and splendid blood in fever churning;
O foulest blot upon the world! O stain
On the world's manhood! Shall it be in vain
That she has suffered what few men could stand,
Because she strove to aid her tortured land?

The curse of Fate on Russia shall be lightened
Never, till she has trod the downward way;
The grip of Fate o'erpowering shall be tightened
On her, too foul to see the light of day.
Weep, weep! O land! No solitary ray
Shall light thy gloom till thou art purged of this—
A crime to weep in hell's most deep abyss.

What gods can they be, who are calmly seeing
Earth's noblest women to vile brutes enthrall'd?
Is there no chord within fair England's being,
That throbs, that at such outrage is appalled?
Not ever was a bitterer crying called
Over the wastes of Holy Russia's soil.
Is England's blood too sluggish now to boil?

The martyrdoms unspeakable for anguish
Call forth from men the sacred human fire;
The prisoned souls that into madness languish
Make all the world a bloody, choking mire.
O agony unutterable! O dire
And dreadful curse! How shall we raise our eyes
As men, as women, to the open skies?

Words! words! and words! 'Tis, after all, not wond'rous
That noblest womanhood should suffer so;
Maybe my protest is unduly thund'rous,
And yet to common manhood do I owe
This,—that I let my outraged spirit go.

Will no one speak the words? Which shall be said,
That England's heart is sleeping, or is dead?