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CONTENTS

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BELLES-LETTRES

RUVIM FRAYERMAN

Early Love

The slender line floated in the water under a stout root and quivered at the slightest stir among the ripples.

The little girl was fishing for trout.

She sat motionless on a boulder and let the river's roar echo through her being. Her gaze was directed downwards, but though dazzled by the radiance that spread over the water, it was not fixed and attentive. Every now and then she glanced around her or away into the distance where the rounded forest-clad hills rose over the river.

The air was clear and the sky, hemmed in by the mountains, looked like a plain tinged by sunset.

But not even the air and the sky she had known from her earliest days interested her at the moment.

With widened eyes she watched the ceaseless flow of the water, and tried to picture to herself those unexplored, unseen lands whither the river rushed and from whence it came. She longed for other lands, she wanted, for instance, to see an Australian dingo. Then she wanted to be a pilot as well, and to be able to sing a little.

So she sang. Softly at first, then louder.

She had a sweet voice. But everything was silent and empty around her. Only a water rat, startled by the sound of her voice, splashed about somewhere near the tree root and swam swiftly toward the rushes, dragging a green reed behind it into its burrow. The reed was long and the rat struggled in vain, for it had not the strength to pull it through the river weeds.

The girl stopped singing to watch compassionately. Then she rose and reeled in her line.

The movement sent the water rat darting in among the reeds and a dark, speckled trout, which till then had been poised motionless in the shining stream, gave one leap and plunged into the depths.

The girl remained alone. She looked up at the sun; it was now near the horizon, was, in fact, about to disappear behind the fir-clad hill.

But although it was quite late the girl was in no hurry to go. She turned slowly on the boulder and then set off at a leisurely pace up the track to where the high woods on the hillside came down to meet her. She entered the woods boldly. The clatter of the river over the stones was left behind; before her lay a great stillness.

Then through the age-old silence came the shrill notes of the camp bugle. They vibrated through the forest clearing where ancient spruces stood with never a tremor in

their boughs, and rang in her ears, urging her to make haste.

But the girl did not quicken her pace. Skirting the marsh where yellow martagon grew, she bent down and pulled several pale blossoms out of the soil, roots and all. Her hands were full of flowers when a light footfall sounded behind her and someone called her name:

"Tanya!"

She turned. There on the clearing beside a large ant-hill stood Filka, the Nanai boy, beckoning to her. She walked up to him with a friendly smile.

On a broad tree stump she saw a can filled with red bilberries. With a narrow hunting knife made of Yakutsk steel he was peeling the bark off a fresh birch switch.

"Didn't you hear the bugle?" he asked. "Why don't you hurry up?"

"It's visiting day," she replied. "But my mother won't be coming. She is working in the hospital. There's no one waiting for me at the camp. Why don't you hurry up yourself?" she added, smiling.

"It's visiting day," he retorted. "My father came to see me from the *stoibishche*[1] and I went as far as the fir-hill to see him off."

"Do you mean to say you've been to see him home and got back already? Why, it's an awful long way!"

"No," Filka replied with dignity. "Why should I see him home when he's going to spend the night by the river near our camp. I just took a dip near the Big Stones and then went to look for you. I heard you singing."

The girl looked at him and burst out laughing.

Filka's dark-skinned face turned a shade darker.

"Well, if you're not in a hurry," he said, "we can stay here a while. I'll treat you to some ant juice."

"But you gave me some raw fish only this morning."

"Yes, but that was fish; this is something quite different. Try it," said Filka.

He thrust his switch into the middle of the ant hill. They bent over it together and waited a while until the thin, freshly-peeled twig was thickly covered with ants. He shook them off, struck the twig lightly against a cedar and then held it out to her. Drops of ant juice were clinging to the shining sap. He licked some off and passed the twig to Tanya for a lick.

"It's good. I've always liked ant juice," she said.

She walked on ahead; Filka kept beside her.

They were silent, Tanya because she loved to ponder things a little and keep quiet whenever she entered the quiet forest. And Filka because he did not want to talk about a mere trifle like ant juice. After all, it was only a juice that she could easily have found for herself.

So they walked the whole length of the forest track without exchanging a word, and finally emerged on the other side of the hill.

Here, at the foot of a stony precipice by the river that hurried tirelessly toward the sea, they saw the rows of big, roomy tents in the open space where their camp was pitched.

The noises of the camp carried to their ears. The grownups must have gone home and the children were playing. But so loud were their voices that up here in the silence of the grey furrowed rocks it seemed to Tanya that somewhere far away a forest sighed and swayed, a forest she had always loved.

"They must be lining up already," she said. "You ought to go down first, Filka, in case they laugh at us for coming in so often together."

[1] *Stoibishche* — nomad camp.

"She needn't have said that, anyway," thought Filka, highly offended. And grabbing hold of a tufty plant that clung sturdily to the ledge of rock, he jumped down onto the path so far below that Tanya was scared.

But he landed on his feet. And Tanya broke into a run along another path between the stunted, crooked pines that grew among the rocks.

The path led her onto a road which, like a river, issued from the forest and, like a river, dazzled her eyes with its white stones and rubble and roared in her ears as a long bus crammed with people pounded past her.

The grownups were on their way back to town from the camp.

The bus went by. But the little girl did not look up at its windows or watch its wheels out of sight; she was not expecting anyone.

She crossed the road and ran toward the camp, leaping ditches like the agile little girl she was.

The children greeted her with a shout. The flag flapped in her face as she went to her place in the line, first laying her flowers carefully on the ground.

Kostya, the Pioneer leader, gave her a threatening glance.

"Tanya Sabaneyeva, you ought to come to lines in time! 'Tenshun! Right dress! Elbows out, there!"

Tanya stuck her elbows out as far as she could, thinking: "It's a good thing to have friends to the right of you, and it's a good thing to have friends to the left of you. It's a good thing, in fact, to have them both ways."

Turning her head to the right she caught sight of Filka, whose swarthy face shone like a polished stone after his bathe. His broad red Pioneer tie was soaking wet.

"Filka," said the leader, with some asperity, "what sort of a Pioneer are you going to be if you will use your tie as swimming trunks! Don't argue, don't argue, now! I know what I'm talking about. You wait! I'll have to have a talk with your father."

"Poor Filka," thought Tanya, "he is unlucky today."

She kept her eyes to the right all the time. She did not look toward the left—for one thing, it was against the rules, and for another, fat little Zhenya, a girl for whom she had no particular preference, was on her left hand.

Ah, this camp! She had spent five summers running in this same camp! But somehow it seemed less jolly today than other times. And she had always loved it so much—the waking up in her tent at dawn while the dew was still dripping from the delicate thorns of the brambles; and the sound of the bugle ringing through the forest like the call of a roe, and the tattoo of the drumsticks and the sourish taste of ant juice and the singing by the camp fire, the fire she knew how to kindle better than anyone else in her group.

Then what had happened today? Was it the river rushing seawards that had put these strange thoughts into her head? She had watched it with a vague presentiment. She had wished to float along with it, but whither? Why did the thought of the Australian dingo fascinate her so? What was the dingo to her? Was it simply that her childhood was slipping away from her? Who knew for certain when childhood would end and the next stage begin?

Tanya wondered about it as she stood at attention in the line; she thought about it later on, too, when she was sitting at supper in the dining tent. Only beside the bonfire which she had been asked to kindle did she finally take herself in hand.

From the forest she brought a slender birch sapling that had been

blown down in a storm and dried on the ground; she placed it in the center and started to build the fire very skillfully around it.

Filka banked it up and waited until the twigs caught fire.

The birch threw off no sparks, but made a soft hissing sound in the dusk that surrounded it.

The children from other groups wandered up to admire the fire. Kostya, the leader, came, and the doctor with the shaven head, and even the camp superintendent. He asked them why they were not singing and playing when they had such a splendid fire.

So the children sang first one song and then another.

But Tanya did not want to sing.

Instead, she sat as she had sat by the water's edge, gazing wide-eyed at the fire—ever changing, ever mobile, ever soaring upwards. And the fire, too, seemed to be saying something, filling her soul with vague misgivings.

Filka, who could not bear to see her looking sad, brought his little can of bilberries to the fireside, seeking wistfully to gladden her with what little he had. He offered the can to all his comrades, but chose the fattest and juiciest berries for Tanya. They were ripe and cool and Tanya ate them with pleasure. And Filka, seeing her brighten, began to talk about bears, because his father was a hunter. And who else could talk about bears as well as Filka could?

But Tanya interrupted him.

"I was born in these parts, in this very district and this very town, and I've never been anywhere else," she said, "but I've always wondered why people talk so much about bears here. It's nothing but bears, bears. . . ."

"That's because we live near the *taiga*[1] and there are lots of bears in the *taiga*," said Zhenya, the fat girl who had no imagination whatsoever but could always find the right reason for everything.

Tanya looked at her thoughtfully and asked Filka whether he could tell them anything about the Australian dingo or wild dog.

But Filka, it appeared, knew nothing about the dingo. He could have told them plenty about the fierce Gilyak dogs, great, shaggy, wolf-like dogs, but he did not know anything about Australian native dogs. Neither did the other children.

Then fat Zhenya piped up:

"But Tanya, what on earth do you want with an Australian dingo?"

Tanya did not reply because she could find nothing to say. She merely sighed.

And as though the sigh had done it, the birch sapling that had been burning so brightly and steadily till then, gave a sudden twist like a live thing and collapsed into ashes. And darkness fell on the circle where Tanya was sitting. The darkness crept close up to the children. They started to scream.

That very moment a voice came out of the darkness, a voice no one recognized. It was not the voice of Kostya.

"Ai, ai, little one, what are you screaming for?" the voice said.

A huge dark hand appeared over Filka's head and threw a bundle of twigs onto the fire. They were tips of fir branches, the kind that flare up with loud crackling and sparks. They do not fade out at once but twinkle like clusters of stars.

The children sprang to their feet; the man came close and squatted down before the fire. He looked smallish, and he wore leather kneecaps and a birchbark hat.

"Don't be afraid, there's no need to be afraid of him," cried Tanya.

[1] *Taiga*—term for marshy belt of pine forest land in N. Asia.

"It's Filka's father, he's a hunter. He is spending the night here beside our camp. I know him well."

It was true. He sat down beside Tanya, nodded to her and smiled. He smiled at the other children as well, showing his broad teeth, worn by the long stem of the copper pipe he held tightly in his fist. Every now and then he would take a glowing ember from the fire for his pipe and draw hard. He said nothing, but this gentle, peaceful sound seemed to convey—to all who cared to listen to it—that there were no evil thoughts in this strange hunter's head.

And so when Kostya, the leader, walked up to the fire and asked why there was a stranger in the camp, the children shouted in chorus:

"Leave him alone, Kostya! It's Filka's father. Let him sit at our fire. We like him."

"Aha, so that's Filka's father," said Kostya. "That's fine. I recognize him. In that case I must inform you, Comrade Hunter, that your son Filka insists on eating raw fish and feeding them to the others, to Tanya Sabaneyeva, for instance. That's one thing. Secondly, he makes swimming trunks out of his Pioneer tie, and bathes near the Big Stones which is strictly forbidden."

Whereupon Kostya walked off to the other camp fires that were burning merrily in other parts of the field. And since the hunter had not understood all that Kostya had said, he looked after him with respect and gave an admonishing shake of his head in Filka's direction.

"Filka," he said, "I stay in the *stoibishche* and hunt for game so that you may live in the town and study and always have enough to eat. But what will become of you if in one day you have done so much mischief that your elders complain of you? Just for that, take this strap of mine and go to the forest and bring back my reindeer. He is grazing somewhere near here. I shall spend the night by your fire."

And he gave Filka a leather strap made of elk skin, so long that you could have flung it over the top of the tallest cedar.

Filka got up and glanced around to see if any of his comrades would offer to share his punishment with him.

And Tanya felt sorry for him; after all, he had treated her to raw fish that morning and ant juice in the afternoon and perhaps she was to blame for his bathing at the Big Stones.

She jumped up. "Come on, Filka," she said. "Let's go and catch the reindeer and bring him back to your father."

They ran off together, towards the forest; it received them as silently as before. Interlacing shadows lay along the moss between the firs, and the berries of the spurge-laurel gleamed in the faint light of the stars. They found the deer not far away under a spruce, nibbling at the moss that hung from its branches. The animal was so docile that Filka did not need his lasso for the antlers. Tanya slipped the halter over its neck and led it across the dewy grass to the copse. But Filka brought it up to the camp fire.

The hunter laughed when he saw the children come up to the fire with the deer. He offered Tanya his pipe; he was a kindhearted man.

This made the children laugh. And Filka said to him sternly:

"Father, Pioneers don't smoke. They mustn't smoke."

The hunter looked surprised. But it gratified him to think that this son of his who lived in the city and went to school and wore a red

kerchief round his neck for a tie knew things of which his father was ignorant. The hunter put his pipe back between his teeth and laid his hand on Tanya's shoulder. And the reindeer breathed in her face, touching her with its antlers that could be gentle enough although they had long since hardened and were as smooth as stone.

Tanya sat down on the ground beside the hunter and felt almost happy again.

Bonfires were blazing all over the field and the children around them were singing. The doctor was hovering about, keeping an eye on their health.

Tanya thought to herself in surprise: "After all, isn't this better than the Australian dingo?"

Yet why did she still yearn to sail down the river? Why did she still hear the voice of the current rattling over the stones? Why did she long for change?

"The summer is over," Tanya said softly. "In a few days we go back to school."

II

The martagon Tanya had dug up by their roots the day before were quite fresh the next morning. She covered the roots with damp grass and moss, wrapped the stalks in fresh birchbark and when she had tucked the flowers under her arm and slung her knapsack over her shoulder, she was transformed at once into a wayfarer setting out on a long journey.

The change she had wished had come sooner than she expected. It had been decided to close the camp and move the children to town, for the doctor said that the night dew was harmful for the health. After all, it was autumn already.

Indeed the autumn grass had grown quite thick and for more than a week now the tents had been covered with hoar frost in the mornings and drops of dew clung to the leaves in the woods until midday, and each drop was as poisonous as a snake.

The journey Tanya had to take was not a long one. As a matter of fact, she was taking the same road as the bus had rattled over the night before.

Although it wound in and out of the forest and was a very new road a film of fine dust hung over it today, flinty dust that not even the ancient trees growing on either side of it could quite dispel. They could only waft it away with the spreading dark bluey-green tips of their branches.

Tanya was keenly aware of this as she walked behind the rest in a halo of golden dust. Alongside her Filka and his father walked; the reindeer brought up the rear. Like Tanya, the animal resented the dust and the loud blast sounded every halfhour on the brass trumpets by the camp musicians marching beside the loaded carts. And when the Red Army men drove by in tanks and shouted "Hurrah" to the children, the reindeer tugged so hard at his halter that he broke away from his master and, with the pack on his back, hid in the woods among the trunks of the pines. And since the pack contained all of Filka's and Tanya's most treasured possessions, they went off to look for the deer.

They found him among the slender birches that trembled with fear like himself.

It was a long time before they could persuade the deer to leave the forest. But when at last the hunter led him back onto the road the musicians were no longer audi-

ble and the dust was laid again on the stones from which it had risen. And the firs no longer waved their branches.

The camp had gone on far ahead.

That was why Tanya found no one home when she entered the town with her canvas bag over her shoulders and her slippers torn from the sharp stones on the road. No one was expecting her.

Her mother had gone off to work in the hospital as usual and her old nurse was down at the river rinsing the laundry. The gates were open and Tanya entered her yard.

But does a traveler need much? A little cold water to drink, a little rest on the grass with one's arms relaxed. There was grass under the fence. It had grown sparser and the tips of the blades had been nipped by frost, but still the grasshoppers chirped in it of an evening although goodness knows where they came from in the midst of the town. Then there was the water. True, it neither rippled nor flowed. Winter and summer, it stood in a barrel that was fixed to an old sled standing in the middle of the yard.

Tanya opened the faucet and gave her flowers a drink, moistening the roots wrapped in the white moss.

Then she drank some water herself and walked toward the trees that grew to the right of the doorstep. A spreading fir tree and a birch with slender branches stood quietly side by side. The fir tree was still fresh and good to look at. Its branches shaded more than half of the courtyard. But the birch was turning yellow.

Tanya touched its white nubbly trunk.

"Why, is it autumn already?" she whispered.

And the birch let fall a withered leaf into her upturned palm.

"Yes, yes," said Tanya, "it is autumn. But the irises are still blooming under the window so perhaps my martagon will bloom a little while longer. But where has everybody gone?"

At that moment she heard a gentle rustling and purring beside her. She looked down; Cossack, the old cat, had brought her kittens and was putting them through their paces before her. Then the duck came waddling up with a worm in its beak.

The kittens had grown during the summer and the smallest of them, Oryol, was no longer afraid of the duck and its worms.

Presently a dog appeared in the gateway. He was of negligible dimensions with a large head and was at least nine years old.

When he noticed Tanya he stopped short in the gateway and a look of shame crept into his old watery eyes—shame for not having been the first, to discover Tanya's return. His first impulse was to turn back and pretend not to have noticed Tanya. Such things do occur in the life of a dog. He was about to turn toward the water barrel without even wagging his tail. But all his clever schemes flew to the winds the moment Tanya called his name:

"Tiger!"

At that he kicked up on his little legs and rushed up to Tanya's knees.

Tanya stroked and patted the head covered with short bristly hair, through which she could already feel the little bumps that came with age.

Yes, all these were old feeble creatures in spite of their impressive names.

Tanya looked down lovingly at the dog.

And when she raised her eyes she saw her nurse, who was old too, and had deep wrinkles and eyes dimmed with age.

Setting down the pail of washing on the ground, the old woman kissed Tanya and said:

"Goodness, how sunburned you are, why, you're as black as a Gilyak. Upon my word that Filka of yours isn't any browner. Your Mamma isn't home. She waited and waited and then she had to go to work. So here we are just by ourselves. We're always by ourselves, aren't we? Shall I put on the *samovar*? Perhaps you'd like something to eat? Who knows what they gave you to eat in that camp."

But Tanya did not want anything to eat.

She took her bag into the house, wandered through the silent rooms and fingered the books on the shelf.

Yes, nurse was right. How often had Tanya been left to spend her leisure as she pleased. But she alone knew how heavily this freedom weighed upon her. She had neither brothers nor sisters. And Mamma was so seldom home. Her breast tightened with a feeling at once bitter and tender, a feeling that brought the tears to her eyes. What was it? The familiar fragrance of the skin on her mother's hands, or the smell of her clothes, or was it her expression, softened by constant care, a look that haunted Tanya always, wherever she went.

There was a time when Tanya would cry every time her mother left the house, but nowadays she only thought about her tenderly.

She did not ask the nurse if her mother would return soon. She only fingered her dress that hung in the wardrobe, sat for a while on her bed and went outside again. She really must plant those flowers she had brought from the forest marsh.

"But it's autumn, Tanya," said the old nurse. "Flowers won't grow any more."

"It doesn't look a bit like autumn yet," Tanya replied.

As always, autumn brought no fogs. The surrounding hills were dark with evergreens as in spring, the sun shone for a long time over the forests before sinking to rest, and under the windows of the houses tall, scentless flowers grew.

"Perhaps my martagon will really bloom for a while? And if they wither their roots will still be left in the ground anyway."

So Tanya dug several holes in the earth of the flowerbed with a big knife and planted the martagon, and stuck in little sticks for support.

Tiger padded around between the beds, sniffing at them. After sniffing everything he raised his large head and looked up at the fence. Tanya, too, turned to look in that direction.

On the fence sat Filka. He was already barefoot, without coat or tie, and his face was shining with excitement.

"Tanya," he shouted, "come on over to our place, quick! Father has given me some real team dogs."

But Tanya turned back to her digging; her hands were black with dirt and her face was wet with perspiration.

"Go on," she said, "you're kidding me. When could he have given them to you? Why, we've only just come back to town."

"It's true, I tell you," protested Filka, "he brought them to town three days ago and kept them in the shed. He wanted to give me a present, and he wants you to come over and look at them."

Tanya gave Filka another searching look.

After all, it might really be true. Children do sometimes get the very things they dream of, and often enough it is their fathers who give them to them. Tanya had read of such things happening. She

threw the knife down on the flowerbed and ran out onto the street.

Filka lived across the road. His gates were closed but he opened them wide for Tanya and there were the dogs.

Beside them, on the ground, sat Filka's father, smoking. His pipe wheezed as loudly as it had done in the forest beside the bonfire and he beamed a welcome at her. The reindeer stood tied to the fence. And the dogs lay huddled together; they had no tails, they were docked—real Gilyak dogs. Without lifting their pointed muzzles from the ground, they eyed Tanya wolfishly.

The hunter rose and stood between her and the animals.

"They are fierce, my friend," he said.

And Filka added: "And much better than your Australian dingo."

"I know these dogs quite well," said Tanya. "But they aren't anything like the wild dingo. Will you harness them for us, please?"

The hunter seemed rather taken aback by her request. Harness team dogs in summer time? Surely it was unreasonable. But when his son begged him the hunter got out a light sleigh and harness from the shed and made the dogs get up. They got up, growling.

And Tanya admired their gay harness covered with cloth and leather, and the plumes waving on their heads.

"That's a handsome gift," Tanya said.

The hunter was pleased at this appreciation of his paternal generosity, even though it was only a little girl who expressed it

The children got into the sleigh and Tanya took up the whip, a long rod of ash wood with an iron tip.

The dogs fussed and fidgeted in the harness, crouching back on their hind legs, ready to start off and pull the sleigh over the bare earth.

The hunter rewarded their efforts by giving them some food out of his sack. Then he took two dried fish from under his coat, two tiny smelts that gleamed in the sun, and handed them to Tanya and Filka. Filka began to munch his noisily. Tanya refused hers at first, but finally took it and ate it all up.

The hunter began to get ready for the journey. He felt it was time for him to leave this town, where his reindeer went hungry all day. He drove the dogs back into the shed and unharnessed them. Then he untied the deer from the fence and fed him salt from his hand. The packs had been ready for some time.

The hunter took leave of the children outside the gates. He gave Tanya his hand, first one and then the other, which is the northern folks' way of saying goodbye to a neighbor, and he invited them to come to see him with the dogs when the first snow fell.

He hugged his little son.

"Be a good hunter and pupil, if you can," he said. Then, no doubt recalling the leader's complaints, he added thoughtfully: "And wear your Pioneer tie round your neck the way you're supposed to."

At the bend of the road he turned round once more, with the reindeer beside him. His face was dark as though hewn from wood, but even from that distance it looked pleasant.

Tanya was sorry to see him disappear so soon around the bend.

"You've got a nice father, Filka," she said thoughtfully.

"Yes, I like him a lot when he doesn't fight."

"Does he really fight ever?"

"Not often, not unless he's drunk."

"Oh, so that's how it is!" was Tanya's comment and she shook her head disapprovingly.

"Didn't yours ever fight? Where is he anyway? Have I never seen him?"

Tanya looked into Filka's eyes to make sure there was no hint of curiosity or laughter in them. She had never spoken to him about her father as far as she could remember.

But Filka returned her gaze simply and frankly.

"Never," she said, "he never fought."

"Then you must love him."

"No, I don't love him," replied Tanya.

"Oh, so that's how it is!" it was Filka's turn to remark. And after a pause he touched her sleeve. "Why?" he asked.

Tanya frowned.

Filka's questions ceased at once, as suddenly as though his tongue had been cut off. It seemed to him that he would never, never question her about anything again.

But suddenly Tanya reddened.

"I do not know him at all."

"Is he dead?"

Tanya shook her head slowly.

"Then where is he?"

"Far away, very far away."

"In America?"

Tanya nodded.

"Aha, I guessed right, he's in America," repeated Filka.

Tanya shook her head still more slowly from side to side.

"Where is he, then?" insisted Filka.

His thick lips were parted. To tell the truth, Tanya had taken him by surprise.

"You know where Algiers and Tunis are?" she asked.

"I know. In Africa. Is that where he is?"

But Tanya shook her head again, this time more sadly than before.

"No, Filka. Do you know of a country called Maroseika?"

"Maroseika?" he repeated thoughtfully. He liked the sound of the word. Maroseika, he thought, must be a beautiful country.

"Yes, Maroseika," Tanya said softly. "Number 40, Maroseika Street. That's where he lives—and the number of his apartment is 53!"

And she vanished into her own yard.

Filka remained alone on the street. Tanya surprised him more and more. He was absolutely nonplussed.

"Maroseika," he thought. Perhaps that was the island whose name he had forgotten during the summer holidays. These confounded islands, he never could memorize them properly. After all, he was only an ordinary schoolboy, a boy who had been born in the dark forest in an animal trapper's hut made of skins. Why should he bother about islands!

III

The water flowed from the barrel into the tin watering can with such a pleasant sound—you would never think it was just old stale water that had been cooped up in a decayed barrel, but a little waterfall just born somewhere under the cool rocks high up in the mountains. Its voice was fresh and full of gratitude to the girl who had released it with one turn of her hand and allowed it to run wherever it willed. It sang loudly in her ears and spouted so beautifully in the air—it seemed as though it wished to show off before Tanya.

But Tanya neither saw nor heard it.

With her hand on the wooden tap she thought about her father.

Her conversation with Filka had stirred painful memories.

But it is difficult to think of a person one has never seen and of whom one remembers nothing but the bare fact that he is your father and lives somewhere far away in Moscow on Maroseika Street—house number 40, apartment 53. In such cases one can only think of oneself. And as for herself, Tanya had long since come to the conclusion that she did not love him, could not and indeed must not love him. Ah, she had gone over all this so many times! He had loved another woman and had left Tanya's mother, left them many years ago and perhaps he had another daughter, other children by now. What, then, was he to Tanya? And what if Mother did say nothing but good of him? That was only her pride, and nothing else. But Tanya could be proud, too. Was it not pride that kept her from mentioning his name? And whenever she did have to utter a few words about him, wasn't her heart ready to burst at such times?

While Tanya reflected thus the water flowed on and on, out of the barrel and the little waterfall leapt and swirled merrily, unnoticed. It had filled Tanya's tin watering can long ago and now overflowed along the ground in careless abandon. It formed a little pool around Tanya's feet but this too failed to rouse her from her brown study. So it ran on further toward the flowerbed, trickling in a snaky stream amid the black pebbles of the path.

An exclamation from her old nurse brought Tanya back to earth.

The old woman was standing on the doorstep, scolding her angrily:

"What's this nonsense! Look, you've let all the water out. And you're all wet yourself. Just look at yourself. You ought to be ashamed to waste your mother's money like that, when she has to pay for the water!"

Tanya glanced down at herself, at her earth-begrimed hands, at her torn slippers and her wet stockings.

She showed her hands to the nurse and the old woman stopped scolding her and, with a gesture of mock despair, went off to the well for fresh water to wash in.

The well was some distance from the yard and the water was cold. While Tanya washed off the dust and dirt the old nurse stood by, grumbling goodnaturedly:

"You're growing fast, why, you'll soon be fifteen and you don't seem to want to know it. You do too much thinking."

"Does that mean I'm clever?" asked Tanya.

"Not exactly clever, but your wits are always woolgathering, and that's what makes you fanciful. Run along now and change your stockings."

She had her own curious way of putting things, this old woman with the sinewy back and the hard, sinewy hands that had bathed Tanya so often in her childhood.

Taking off her wet shoes and stockings on the doorstep, Tanya entered the house barefoot.

She warmed her feet on her mother's rug, the cheap little deerskin rug worn threadbare in spots, and dug her hands under the pillow to take off the chill. The well-water had been so icy! But colder than the water to her touch was the stiff paper that crackled under her fingers.

From under the pillow she drew out a letter. It was slightly crumpled, the edge was torn; it looked as if it had been read many times over. What could it mean?

Mother never hid letters under her pillow.

Tanya glanced at the envelope. It was addressed to her mother in her father's handwriting. Tanya knew it at once by the way her

heart throbbed and by the address written below. He must have been afraid the letter would not reach them if he had been so careful as to write in the corner: "No. 40, Maroseika Street, apartment 53."

Tanya laid the letter on the bed and paced thoughtfully up and down the room in her bare feet. Then she put the letter back under the pillow and renewed her pacing. Presently she took the letter out and read it again.

"Dear Masha, I have written you several times but apparently my letters have not reached you. You live so far away after all, at the other end of the world. At last my long-awaited dream is to come true—I have received an appointment in the Far East. I shall be working in your town. We are leaving in a few days by 'plane, Nadezhda Petrovna, Kolya and myself. I have arranged for him to attend your school. They will put him in the seventh grade. You know how dear this boy is to Nadya and myself. We will board the steamer in Vladivostok, and you can expect us around the first of the month. Please dear, prepare Tanya for this. It pains me terribly, Masha, to have to confess to you how guilty I feel about her, not because you and I found it wiser to part, not because of all that happened to us, to you, to me, and to Nadya. That's not the reason I feel conscience-stricken. But I have often forgotten her, and so many years have gone by. True, she wrote to me very seldom. And even in those rare letters she sent when she had just learned to write and could barely manage to crowd three words in her baby handwriting onto one page, I sensed an accusation. She does not know me at all. How will she meet me? I dread the meeting a little. After all she was only eight months old when we parted. She had such helpless little feet and the toes on them were no bigger than peas and the palms of her chubby hands were a bright pink. I remember this so well. . . ."

But Tanya remembered nothing. She glanced down at her bare, smooth-skinned legs tanned now up to the knees, and at the high arches of her feet. They were such easy feet to stand on. She looked at her hands; they were still narrow in the wrist but with firm fingers and strong palms. They were good hands to grasp things with. Yet who, besides her mother, took any pride in their growth and strength? Even a man who sowed peas by the wayside came in the mornings to look on his handiwork; and rejoiced when the shoots, however small, made their appearance.

Tanya wept bitterly.

After a while she felt comforted; and joy entered her being as simply and naturally as hunger and thirst.

"Father is coming!"

Tanya jumped onto the bed, throwing the pillows onto the floor. She lay prone and remained thus for a long while, laughing softly and crying a little until all at once she remembered that she did not love her father at all. What had happened to her pride? Had that boy, Kolya, not stolen her father's love from her?

"After all, I hate them," she said aloud.

And again the aching hurt swept through her, advancing and receding like a wave.

Tanya rose to her knees and struck the window-frame sharply with her fist.

The window opened and Tanya saw Filka again, for the third time that day.

It was plain that there were no mists of doubt or bitterness in his soul.

He was sitting under the window with an atlas open on his knees.

"There is no such country as Maroseika," he said. "There is a land called Morocco far away, and there is an island called Majorca. But Maroseika is not an island, nor a peninsula, nor a continent. Why do you make fun of me?"

Tanya looked at Filka without seeing him, as though she were looking through him at the sandy path beyond.

"Oh, hush, Filka, hush!" she said. "In any case I don't like . . ."

"Why, have I offended you?" Filka asked. His hands dropped dejectedly to his sides when he saw the tears on Tanya's lashes. He was dismayed.

And since it was just as easy for Filka to lie as to tell the truth he gave the atlas a loud smack and exclaimed:

"There *is* a country called Maroseika! This stupid atlas is no good at all. It isn't complete! I even remember the teacher telling us about Maroseika."

Tanya looked at Filka as though she had just become aware of his presence, his simple-hearted lie comforted her.

"This boy will always be my friend," she thought. "I will never let anyone take his place. Hasn't he always shared everything he has with me, no matter how little he has?"

"Filka," she said aloud, "I didn't mean you. I was speaking about another boy called Kolya. Forgive me, please."

Filka had forgiven her long ago, at the first word spoken in a kinder tone.

"If you meant someone else," he said, "then it's all right for you not to like him. It's all the same to me. But why don't you like him?"

Tanya did not answer immediately.

"Tell me, Filka," she asked after a pause. "Should a person be proud or not?"

"Yes, he should," said Filka firmly. "But if it's not you, but Kolya, that's proud—then that's another matter. Then you just remember me if you need a strong arm or a lasso—the kind they catch reindeer with, or a big stick, like I have learned to use so well, hunting wild things in the forest."

"But you don't know him at all, so why should you want to fight him?"

"No, but I know you," said Filka.

And the thought of repaying a hurt by a blow and not by tears appealed to her strangely at the moment; it seemed to clear the mist of uncertainty and doubt that had tormented her. She was no bad hand herself at knocking the peaceful creatures off the trees with well-aimed stones and twigs.

But the next moment the thought struck her: "I believe I am getting spiteful and nasty."

All of a sudden Filka jumped up and walked away from the window glancing round in some confusion over Tanya's shoulder. Then with his atlas tucked tightly under his arm he left the yard.

Tanya turned to find her mother standing beside her. She had entered the room noiselessly. She wore a raincoat over her white hospital smock and looked, to Tanya, quite different from the mother she remembered a month ago, in the same way that an object placed close to the eyes suddenly loses its familiar form. And Tanya gazed at her mother in a sort of daze for a moment or two. In that brief space she took in the two faint lines from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, the slim feet in shoes too large for them—her mother never could bother about her appearance—and the slender, delicate hands that

healed the sick so skillfully. Only her expression remained unchanged. It was thus that Tanya always remembered it. Mother's grey eyes were looking down into hers and in their cool depths, all Tanya's hurts instantly dissolved like a pinch of salt thrown into the sea. She kissed her mother tenderly, careful not to touch her eyes for fear of extinguishing the light in them.

"Mamma," she said.

Her mother embraced her.

"I hurried home as fast as I could," she said. "I have been lonesome for you, Tanyusha."

She treated her daughter to a long, careful scrutiny; first, the hair bleached by the sun till it looked like steel; then, the hot, glowing face with its bronzed skin.

"The camp has done her good," thought the mother.

Then she glanced down at her feet and was surprised to see that her daughter was barefoot. It was only then that she noticed the disorder in the room; the pillows on the floor, the crumpled counterpane and the letter taken out of its envelope and lying on the bed.

Then the look in her eyes, the look Tanya had feared to disturb with her caresses, died out as though a sudden gust of wind had ruffled their calm. In its place came uneasiness, uncertainty and alarm. Tanya even discovered something evasive in them. Otherwise why did mother bend down so slowly to lift the pillows off the floor and tidy the bed?

"So you have read it without me, Tanya?" she asked softly.

Tanya bent her head.

"You ought to be glad, dear."

But not a sound came from Tanya's lips.

Her mother waited patiently.

"Mamma, that boy—is he my brother?" the girl asked at last.

"No," the mother replied. "He is no relation. He is Nadezhda Petrovna's nephew, but he has been brought up by them and your papa loves him and is very kind to him because the boy has neither father nor mother. Papa is a very good man, Tanya. I have always told you that. "

"Then he is nothing to me, he's not even my brother," said Tanya, her head bent still lower.

The mother raised her daughter's head gently and kissed her face twice.

"Tanyusha, dear child, we must have a talk about all this. You will meet them and see them for yourself, Tanya. Your father will be very glad. You will go to the wharf to meet them, won't you?"

"Will you, Mother?"

But she turned away from her daughter's searching eyes.

"No, Tanya, I cannot. You know very well how busy I am."

And since her head was turned aside she could not see, she could only feel how Tanya hid her face in her frail hand, clinging close to her.

"Mamma, I love only you. I shall always stay with you. Never with anybody else. I shall never need anyone else. I won't go to meet them."

IV

Amazing though it was, the flowers Tanya had planted in the garden were still blooming the morning her father was due to arrive. Whether it was that the angry little stream that flowed from the barrel moistened their roots thoroughly, or whether, like many flowers in that northern clime which deprives them of their scent but

makes them hardy, they were merely tenacious, it was hard to say; at any rate they were standing firmly on their tall stalks when Tanya came to look at them. She decided not to give them to anyone.

She drove away the duck that had settled among the flowerbeds and glanced up to where the watch tower stood. The wooden structure dominated the town where the wild birds of the woods sang in the yards at dawn. The signal flag had not been hoisted. This meant that the boat had not been sighted yet. It might be delayed. But Tanya was not really interested in the flag. She had no intention of going down to the wharf. And if she had bound her soft hair with a ribbon and changed into her best dress it might have only been because it was a holiday. The new school term began today.

But it was still a long time till school opened.

Why had she risen so early this morning?

"What am I to do if I can't sleep?" she would have told her mother, had the latter been awakened by the creaking of the door. "What was I to do if I couldn't get to sleep all last night?" she would have said.

But would that boat ever come? Perhaps it didn't really exist at all. Perhaps it was merely a phantom for which there was neither time nor space and which was perhaps sailing at this very moment down some other river, with some other mist rising at its prow?

Here in the yard it was rather misty too. Drops of night mist still shone on the branches of the birch trees, their trunks were still moist—the trees had not quite awakened from slumber.

Yes, Tanya had left the house far too early! But hark, she could hear footsteps in the street outside the gate. They thudded over the grass, over the earth. Someone was hurrying to the wharf. Was it a brother going to meet his sister, or a father hastening to embrace his son, or maybe just a fisherman waiting for tidings sent by the boat? Perhaps it was Filka hurrying to catch some fish for the last time before school started.

Tanya sat down on the bench beside the gate.

She listened, her ears were sharp enough to catch the slightest sound in the sleepy grasses dozing beneath her feet, and the drowsy trees dreaming above her head.

She started at the sound of a faint whistle, so faint and far away that only a waiting heart could have caught it. That was the boat passing the lighthouse on Cape Cherny.

Tanya opened the gate and went outside. Presently she returned and stood still a while by the flowerbed. Perhaps she ought to pluck them after all, while they were still fresh and could give her father some pleasure. They were all she had.

So Tanya plucked her flowers, her martagons, and the irises she had planted and tended before she left for the camp.

Then she called Tiger, who followed her eagerly onto the street. And they walked together through the still slumbering town. The watch tower alone knew nothing of sleep. Its tiny door that looked like an embrasure was open on the windward side. Its flag waved gaily riverwards.

And the people were going riverwards, too, hurrying down to the wharf.

Tanya paused for a moment at the top of the slope to look at the river from above. Oh, how bright it was, though bounded by hills dark with pines. How broad it was! Even the shadow of those same hills could not cover it. Was not this the broad river down which Tanya had wished to sail far away to other

countries, to the lands where the dingo-dog dwelt. Perhaps that was where the river was flowing?

The boat was quite close now. Black and rugged as a cliff, she nevertheless looked small on this river, she was lost in this smooth shining plain, although the roar of her engines shook the cedars on the hills like a hurricane.

Tanya ran down the slope. The boat was being moored to the wharf which was crowded with people. The wharf was packed with barrels, standing on end, barrels lying on their sides, like toys giants had been playing a game with and left there.

People were waving their handkerchiefs from the deck. Were they waving to her? She paled at the thought. With an effort she raised her hand and waved in response. But how ridiculous! How could she expect in this crowd to recognize a father she had never seen in her life? And how would he recognize her? She had not thought of this when she had run to the wharf. Why had she given way to the impulse of a heart that was beating now so violently it seemed as though it didn't know whether to beat faster or stop beating altogether.

Here she was, then, standing with her pitiful little bouquet in her hand, beside the barrels, and the old dog licked her legs in helpless sympathy.

People were passing her.

There they were—maybe, those three, the man in a hat with a glistening nap, the woman—elderly, and the boy—tall and thin and thoroughly unpleasant.

But no, they walked past looking straight ahead of them and obviously not expecting anyone to meet them.

Or perhaps it was the three over there: the stout man in a heavy cloth cap, a young but ugly woman, and a fat boy, even more unpleasant than the first.

"Yes, there they are, surely!"

Tanya stepped forward. But the man only gave her a passing glance, while the fat boy pointed to her flowers and said:

"Are you selling them?"

Tanya moved away, trembling at the insult. She did not cry out. She simply went and hid among the barrels and stayed there until it was all over, and there was no one left on the wharf and the boards no longer creaked under footsteps. What was she waiting for now that everyone was gone? Her people had not arrived today, that was all.

Tanya emerged from her hiding place among the barrels. The sailors had already gone ashore and the ambulance men were passing by with the stretchers. They were always the last to leave the boat. Tanya walked beside them. On the stretcher under a cloth blanket lay a boy. His face was flushed with fever. He was fully conscious, however, and was holding on tightly to the edge of the stretcher as though afraid he might fall off. Because of the effort, or perhaps because he was really afraid, a fixed smile hovered on his lips.

"What is the matter with him?" asked Tanya.

"Malaria. Took sick on the boat," replied one of the stretcher bearers.

Noticing Tanya walking alongside, the boy suppressed his fears and lay straight and stiff on the stretcher, gazing up at Tanya's face with his feverish eyes.

"You have been crying this morning?" he said suddenly.

Tanya hid her mouth in the flowers, pressing them against her face as if the poor little blossoms had a fragrance of their own. But what could this sick boy know of the fragrance of northern flowers?

"You've been crying," he persisted.

"Don't be silly," Tanya replied,

laying the flowers beside him on the stretcher. "I did nothing of the sort. A great fat creature poked her finger in my eye."

The last man to hurry down the gangplank onto the wharf saw no one but a lonely little girl climbing dejectedly up the bank.

V

The first day in school, such a happy one for all the other children, was a sad day for Tanya. She was alone when she entered the playground that had been pounded by children's feet.

The janitor had already finished ringing the bell.

She pushed open the heavy door. The corridor was as bright and empty and silent as the playground had been. Was she late?

"No," the janitor reassured her. "Run, quick! The teachers haven't gone to the classrooms yet."

But she had not the strength to run. Slowly and painfully, as though she were climbing a steep hill, she walked along the waxed floor of the long corridor, past the bright posters that hung high on the walls above her head. The sun poured in on them through the ten great windows so that every single comma could be clearly seen.

"Welcome, children, to the school, this new term!" they greeted her. "Let us complete this term with honors!"

A little girl with two braids that curled at the ends ran past her, and turning round, she chanted:

"*Ich bin, du bist, er ist,*" and put out her tongue.

What slender agile legs for such a tiny girl! Was it not the old Tanya, little Tanya, who had poked her tongue out at herself?

But the little girl had disappeared round the corner and Tanya came to a standstill outside a tall door, the door of her new classroom.

The door was closed but it did not shut out the hubbub in the room.

This familiar noise, like the dear sounds of the river and the trees, the sounds of things she had known from childhood, helped her to muster her thoughts and regain her self-possession.

And, as though making peace with herself, she said:

"Oh, all right, let's forget everything."

She opened the door. A wild shout greeted her before she had crossed the threshold.

She was smiling already, as a man smiles on entering a warm house after the frozen outdoors, before he has had time to distinguish either the faces or the objects in the house; because he is smiling in response to the warmth and to the words not yet uttered, words that he knows will not be unfriendly.

"Tanya, come on over here!" they shouted.

"Come and sit by us, Tanya!" yelled others.

And Filka did a handspring on the desk, a handspring of which any boy might well be proud, although his face was sad and he looked into Tanya's eyes more closely than the rest.

Tanya kept smiling.

She chose Zhenya for her desk mate and sat down beside her as she had at the bonfire in camp. Filka found a seat behind her.

At that moment Alexandra Ivanovna, the teacher of Russian, entered the room.

She mounted the raised platform, but descended almost at once.

"If four painted boards," she thought to herself, "can elevate one person above others, this world isn't worth much."

And skirting the platform with

care, she came so close to the children that between her and them there could be no barriers other than the defects and virtues of each. She was a young woman, her face was fresh, her expression bright and calm; it was an expression that drew the attention of even the most wayward children. She always wore a little star made of some semi-precious stone from the Urals in the bosom of her black dress.

Curiously enough the children never mistook her fresh and youthful appearance for inexperience, of which they would have taken advantage at every opportunity.

They never made fun of her.

"Children," she said, testing her own voice after the long summer interval. It was as deep and compelling as always.

"Children," she said, "today is a holiday. We are beginning the new term and I am glad to be with you again, glad to be your teacher again for the seventh year now. You have all grown in this period and I am a little older. But we have always worked well together, I think."

And no doubt she would have gone on to say all the usual things that are said to children before the beginning of the new term, had not two new pupils entered the classroom at that point. They were the two boys whom Tanya had met that morning on the pier. One was thin and tall, the other had plump cheeks that gave him a wicked mischievous look.

Everyone stared at them. But not one of these forty boys and girls fidgeting in their seats looked at the newcomers with such anxiety as did Tanya. For now, in another moment, she would know which of them had made her suffer from a torment that was worse than fear.

The teacher asked them their names and the fat boy replied:

"Godilo-Godlevsky."

And the thin one said: "Borshch."

"So 'they' didn't come this morning after all," thought Tanya in great relief. And once again she told herself: "All right, let's forget everything for a while."

To the teacher, however, the laughter that rang through the room augured a poor beginning.

But all she said was: "Well, we will start at once. I hope that you have not forgotten anything during the summer."

Filka sighed audibly.

The teacher glanced at him for a second, but not sternly. She resolved to be particularly lenient to the children today. After all, it was their holiday, let them feel that she was their guest for the day.

"What makes you sigh like that, Filka?" she asked.

Filka rose to his feet.

"I got up at sunrise this morning," he said, "to write my friend a letter. But I had to put it aside because I had forgotten what punctuation mark to put in for this sentence: 'Where did you go so early this morning, my friend.'"

"Too bad you forgot," said the teacher and glanced at Tanya, who sat with eyes downcast. Alexandra Ivanovna, thinking that the girl wished to avoid answering, said:

"Tanya Sabaneyeva, you haven't forgotten the punctuation for a sentence like that, have you? Can you tell us?"

"Goodness!" thought Tanya. "Filka means me. Must everyone, even Filka, be so cruel? Aren't they going to let me forget for a moment what I am trying so hard not to remember!"

"A sentence like this requires a question mark," she replied.

"You see," the teacher said to Filka, "Tanya remembers quite well. Now, come out to the blackboard and write another sentence of the same kind."

Filka approached the blackboard and took up a piece of chalk.

Tanya sat as before with her eyes lowered, her face partly covered with her hand. But what he could see of her face struck Filka as so sorrowful that he wished the ground would open and swallow him if the joke he had made was to blame for her mood.

"What's the matter with her?" he thought.

And raising his hand, he wrote an extremely badly-spelled sentence.

The teacher made a gesture of despair.

"Filka, Filka," she said reproachfully, "you have forgotten all you knew. You don't even know how to spell, let alone where to put your commas. How did you come to make mistakes like these?"

There was a roar of laughter from the class when they saw what Filka had done, and Tanya raised her head. When Filka looked at her again she was laughing louder than the rest.

With a sly grin he brushed the chalk off his fingers.

Filka was clearly well pleased with himself.

And the teacher leaned against the wall and watched him in amazement.

How could it be that a boy like this, a boy she had always valued for his quick, alert mind, could be so pleased about his stupid blunder? There must be something behind this. The children were deceiving her. And she had imagined she knew them so well.

VI

Those rare moments when her mother came into the yard after work to rest on the grass beside the flowerbeds were the happiest of all for Tanya. What matter that the autumn grass was already too scant to hide the earth properly, and that the flowerbeds were bare?—It was still very pleasant. Tanya would lie down beside her mother and lay her head in her lap. And then the grass would seem twice as soft, the sky twice as clear. Both of them would gaze upward long and wordlessly to where at a dizzy height above the river, eagles soared, ready to swoop down on the fish in the estuary. They hung motionless until a passing airplane forced them to move. The throb of the engines, dulled by the forests, barely reached the yard. And when it suddenly ceased or, like a strange cloud of sound, melted away gradually over the garden, the mother and daughter still sat without speaking.

But today, listening to this sound, the mother said:

"What a great distance lies between us. I suppose they haven't come after all."

Tanya said nothing.

The mother stretched out her hand towards the flowerbed, bare now of all save a few headless stalks.

"Where have the irises gone?" she said. "This little flowerbed of yours looked so nice. Surely that greedy duck hasn't snapped off the heads of all the flowers, has it?"

"I chased her away myself this morning," said Tanya, lying still beside her mother.

"Martagon," said the mother dreamily, "they don't grow near Moscow, you know. Your father used to be very fond of our flowers and I should have liked you to take him some."

Tanya kept silent.

"He is a good, kind man," her mother added.

Tanya sat up suddenly and then lay down again on the ground with her head against her mother's side.

"What is it, Tanya?" asked her

mother. "Did you want to tell me something?"

"If he is a good man," said Tanya, "why did he leave us?"

The mother recoiled, as if there had been a sharp stone in the grass at her elbow.

And Tanya, realizing at once the cruelty of her words, rose to her knees and covered her mother's dress, face and hands with kisses.

It was so wonderful, so peaceful, lying there together, without speaking, on the sparse grass, in this cramped little yard with nothing but the sky overhead. And yet a single word—"father"—had robbed them of their peace? How then could she love him?

"Mamma," said Tanya, "I shan't do it again. I oughtn't to have done it. What a good thing they haven't come here. What a very good thing it is! Surely it's not so bad—being by ourselves, is it? And as for the flowers, I'll plant some more. I'll collect some seeds, I know a swamp in the woods where there are lots; I'll do everything, and we'll make our yard lovely again, a hundred times lovelier, you'll see."

She chattered on, hardly noticing what she was saying. She did not hear the click of the gate and her mother's telling her over and over again:

"Tanya, Tanya, go and open the gate, someone wants to come in. It must be for me from the hospital."

Tanya rose at last to her feet, now she could hear the footsteps outside the gate. She went unwillingly, for she did not want to let anyone in at this moment, not even from the hospital.

"Whom do you want?" she asked impatiently through the gate. "The doctor? Are you a patient?"

But before her stood a man in excellent health, a tall and pleasant faced man. He wore topboots and the uniform of an army colonel and he looked smilingly at her without speaking. How very odd!

She heard her mother utter a faint cry. Tanya screwed up her eyes a little and leaned against the gatepost.

"It's Father!" She guessed it at once.

He stepped over a board that lay on the ground and advanced toward her mother; he stooped as though about to kiss her. She recoiled and offered him her hand. He took it submissively and held it in both of his. With her free hand her mother pointed to Tanya. He turned so suddenly that his leather belt creaked. To her too he stretched his large, broad palms. Tanya came toward him. She was pale and there was a frightened look in her eyes. He kissed her forehead and pressed her head against him. He smelt of new woolen cloth and leather.

Then he said:

"What a big girl you are! I ought really to have brought you flowers instead of candy."

He thrust his hand into his pocket to pull out the box. But the pocket was small and the box was large and it had caught in the lining. He plucked at it with his fingers, he squashed the box and tugged until his face reddened with the effort. And Tanya stood there waiting, her face growing paler and paler. And looking at his face, suddenly moist like a child's, Tanya thought: "Is he a good man or not?"

At last he extracted the box and handed it to Tanya. She took it, but she did not know what to do with it—it was rather a nuisance.

She laid it down on the old sled near the water barrel and the drops began to patter down on it in a loud tattoo that sounded like thunder in the silence of the courtyard. Then the dog came and Cossack, the cat, with her kittens and they all sniffed at the box.

Her mother shook her head al-

most imperceptibly. She picked up the box and carried it into the house.

And Tanya remained in the yard.

Her father embraced her again.

Now that the struggle with the candy box was over he started to talk. He was excited and talked in a very loud voice and smiled a strained smile all the time.

"It is such a pity you were not at the wharf. Nadya and I expected you. It is true we were detained for a while on board. Kolya is down with malaria and we had to wait for the stretcher bearers to take him off the boat. And what do you think, some little girl on the wharf gave him some flowers. They were martagon lilies—I hadn't seen any for years. Just imagine, she came and laid the flowers on his stretcher. He was wishing it had been you, he said. But you were not there."

Tanya raised her hand to her temple and pressed her fingers against it as though she wanted to stop the blood from rushing to her face. She backed away from her father.

"What is the matter, Tanya?" he asked.

"Papa, please don't speak so loud," she said, "I can hear you quite well."

The silence of the yard startled her. Her father stopped speaking. His excited face grew stern. The smile faded from his lips. But his eyes kept their kind look. He coughed. And, strange to say, the cough sounded familiar to Tanya. She coughed in exactly the same way whenever sad thoughts touched her with their chill breath.

He gazed steadily into her face, pressing her shoulder gently.

"I know you are angry with me, Tanya," he said. "But we're going to be good pals anyway, aren't we?"

"Let us go and have tea," said Tanya, as she would to anyone else. "Would you like some tea?"

"Oho! So that's what my little girl is like!" said her father, pressing still more heavily on her shoulder.

She knew what he meant.

"Come and have tea with us, Papa."

And as she said it the tears started to her eyes.

"I am not used to you yet, Papa."

He took his hand from her shoulder and stroked her cheek.

"Yes, you are right, Tanyusha," he said in a whisper. "It is hard at fifteen, very hard, my child. But still we're going to be friends just the same, aren't we? Let's go and have tea."

And for the first time the wooden porch of Tanya's home resounded to an unfamiliar step, the heavy step of a man: her own father's step.

VII

When Tanya was asked in school whether Kolya Sabaneyev, who had been put in their class, was any relative of hers she said "yes" to some and "no" to others and, since it was immaterial to most of her questioners, they soon stopped asking her. Filka, who had once wasted so much effort in search of a country called Maroseika, asked Tanya no more questions.

But he sat at the desk behind her where he could look at the back of her neck as much as he pleased. It is funny how expressive the back of a person's neck can be. It could be cold and hard, like the stone from which Filka struck fire in the woods, and it could be as pale as the stalk of a lone blade of grass swaying back and forth in the breeze.

The back of Tanya's neck was sometimes the one and sometimes the other but most of all it expressed her only desire—which was to know nothing of what was going on behind her.

Behind her both Filka and Kolya sat.

Which of them did this persistent desire of Tanya's concern?

Filka always looked at the bright side of things, so he decided that it concerned him least of all. As for Kolya, if Tanya had called him proud, she had been wrong. Filka did not consider Kolya proud. He was perhaps rather weak in health, his arms were too thin, his face too pale, but he wasn't proud, anyone could see that.

When Filka had first shown him how they chewed resin in school, Kolya had merely asked:

"What is that?"

"It's resin from spruce trees," Filka had replied. "You can get it from the Chinese who sells *lipuchki* on the corner. He'll give you a whole lot for fifty kopecks."

"And what's *lipuchki*?" Kolya inquired.

"Say," Filka said resentfully, "you want to know too much all at once."

Kolya had not taken offence at Filka's remark.

"All right," he said. "I'll soon find out. That's a funny custom you have in your school. I never knew anyone to chew resin before."

But he bought a lot of it just the same and treated Filka to some and chewed some himself; he soon learned to crack it with his teeth as noisily as the other children.

He offered some to Tanya as nicely as anyone could wish and she smiled back at him, showing teeth that gleamed as white as snow.

"Perhaps this circumstance accounts for the white teeth around here," he said. "This stuff must be awfully good for cleaning the teeth."

But everything he said struck her as abominable.

"Oh, go away with your circumstances accounting for this, that, and the other," she retorted.

He laughed and said nothing.

He looked at her with his light eyes that made her think of ice and for the first time Tanya noticed the obstinate expression in them.

"Quite right," he repeated calmly, "this circumstance does account for it."

Tanya could not decide whether to regard this as a downright quarrel or not, but they were enemies from that moment and this ailing boy began to occupy her thoughts more now than when he had first arrived.

Every free day Tanya dined at her father's house.

On her way there she passed the town park. It was near her house and opened onto a road leading to the fortress. It was not a straight road. It led along the shore, winding now to the right, now to the left, as though turning for a last look at the river which, having driven back the mountains, now lay below in all its beauty.

Tanya walked along unhurriedly, turning every now and again, like the road, to look at the river. When it was quiet she could hear the hiss of the heavy clay settling into the water by the bank. Her dog followed her everywhere and listened intently to every sound.

A half-hour's walk brought them to her father's house.

It stood at the end of a row of houses for army commanders. Lime splashed stones covered the paths, but even through the lime white tipped blades of grass pushed up between the stones.

There was no noise here. And the glass doors of the house were always open.

Tanya entered the house through the glass door and the dog remained

outside. How often she had wished that she could stay outside and the dog go instead of her.

Yet everyone in this house was so kind to her.

Nadezhda Petrovna was always the first to meet Tanya on the threshold. A quiet woman with an unaffected manner and a kind face, she put her arm around Tanya's shoulder and kissed her, greeting her invariably with the words:

"Aha, Tanya has come!"

And although her voice was soft as she said it, Tanya's heart filled to the brim with distrust.

"Why does she always look at Father when she kisses me," thought Tanya. "Is it not because she wants to show off to him: 'See how nice I am to your daughter, now you won't be able to say anything against me nor will she.'"

The very thought of this made her tongue tied, and her eyes refused to obey her—she could not even look her father in the face.

And it was only when she went up to him and put her hand in his that she felt calm again.

Then she could bring herself to say "How do you do?" quite naturally to Kolya as well.

"How are you, Tanya," he would reply pleasantly, but not a minute before or after she had nodded to him.

Her father said nothing. He merely touched her cheek lightly and hurried on the dinner.

Dinner was a jolly affair in this house. They ate potatoes and venison bought from passing Tungusi. They squabbled good-naturedly over the tastiest morsels, and laughed at Kolya who could stuff a whole potato into his mouth, and scold him for doing it. Sometimes her father would even rap him over the nose playfully but smartly enough to make it swell a little.

"Hey there, silly old Papa," Kolya would say, frowning. "You mustn't play tricks like that with me. I'm not a kid, you know."

"That's true, you rascal, you're not a kid," Father would say. "You are all so terribly grown-up, aren't you. Just can't get the better of you, can we! But we'll see what you say when the cherry pies are served."

This with a sly glance at Tanya.

"Goodness me," Tanya was thinking. "What do I care about cherry pie when I know he will never love me as he loves Kolya, never call me a rascal or hit me on the nose or refuse me an extra helping. And I'll never be able to call him 'silly old Papa,' like that nasty little toady does. Do they really think they can fool me with their old cherry pies?"

And her heart would start aching again, that dull gnawing ache.

Yet she did like to be here. She liked the woman's voice; the house rang with that voice; she liked her well-built figure and the kind face that always had a smile for Tanya; she liked the stalwart figure of her father, his thick cow-hide belt that lay on the divan, and the tiny Chinese billiard-set they all played, the click of the little iron balls. And even Kolya, this quiet boy with the obstinate look in his clear eyes, attracted her. He never forgot to leave a bone for her dog.

But it seemed to Tanya that he never thought about her, although they went to school together, dined together, and played billiards together. He never troubled himself enough about her to hate her—not even for one moment in the day—not even to hate her as much as she hated him.

Then why should she have agreed to go fishing with him and show him the spot where the bream would rise?

VIII

Tanya loved the stars, the morning and evening stars and the big stars that shone low in the sky in summer, and the stars in autumn so many and so high, so far away. It was pleasant to walk under the stars through the quiet town, down to the river that was full of stars, too, the same stars that seemed to pierce the dark and silent waters. It was pleasant to sit on the clay bank and bait your line and wait for the fish to bite, and know that you had not wasted a single one of the minutes allowed by the laws of fishing.

The dawn is still a long way off; it will be a long time before the sun spreads the film of mist over the river. First, the trees are shrouded in mist and then the water begins to steam. But in the meantime you can allow your thoughts to roam where they will; to the chipmunk busy under the hedge and the ants, and you wonder if they ever go to sleep or if they ever feel cold in the early morning.

Yes, it is lovely, this hour before dawn.

But when Tanya awoke that morning there were only a few stars; some had faded altogether, others still shone faintly down on the horizon.

"It will probably be rotten," she thought. "Kolya is coming with us today."

And all at once she heard someone knocking. It was Filka. He had tapped twice on her windowpane.

Tanya put on her clothes in the darkness and threw a shawl over her shoulders. Then she opened the window and jumped down into the yard.

Filka stood before her. His eyes looked a strange color in the dim light and glittered like a madman's. The fishing rods were slung over his shoulder.

"Why are you so late?" Tanya asked. "Didn't you dig the worms yesterday?"

"You try and dig up any worms in the town," said Filka in a hoarse voice. "It's not so late, we'll be in good time."

"That's right," said Tanya, "it's too bad about the worms. Got my rod, too?"

"Umhum . . . ."

"Come on then, what are we waiting for?"

"What about Kolya?" asked Filka.

"Oh, yes, Kolya!" And Tanya even frowned a little in the darkness, as though she had completely forgotten about Kolya, as though she had not remembered him as soon as ever she woke up and looked out of the window at the stars.

"Let's wait for him in the street near the embankment," she said and whistled softly to her old dog.

But the dog, curled up under the old sleigh, did not stir a paw. He merely glanced up at Tanya as much as to say: "I'm through! Haven't I followed you often enough, gone fishing with you in the river in summer, and skating in winter, haven't I carried your steel skates in my teeth many and many a time? But now! That will do. Just think, why should I stir so early in the morning!"

Tanya understood him perfectly.

"Oh, all right," she said. "Stay where you are."

But perhaps the cat would like to come.

"Cossack!" called Tanya.

The cat got up at once and all her kittens followed her.

"What do you want *her* for?" asked Filka.

"Never mind, never mind, Filka," said Tanya. "She knows as well as we do what we are going to the river for."

And off they went, plunging into

a morning that, like a magic forest, sprang up before them as they went. Every tree in the woods looked like a cloud of smoke, every spiral rising from the chimneys of the houses was transformed into a strange bush.

They waited for Kolya at the corner just before the road sloped down to the river.

They waited for a long time, and Filka blew on his fingers to warm them; it was cold work digging for worms in the frozen earth early in the morning.

Tanya glowed with a malicious joy. She said nothing, but her small, chilly figure with the uncovered head and the soft hair that curled up in the damp, seemed to say: "See what a fellow that Kolya is, after all."

At last they saw him. He was turning the corner of the street and was not hurrying in the least. He walked up to them, his footsteps very plainly audible, and took his rod off his shoulder.

"Forgive me please," he said, "I am rather late. Zhenya persuaded me to come to her place last night. She also showed me a lot of fish. Only she keeps them in an aquarium. But she has some nice-looking fish. There is one that is quite golden with a long black tail just like a dress. I spent quite a while looking at it. So you must forgive me for being late."

Tanya shook with rage.

"Forgive me please," she repeated several times. "Goodness, what politeness! You would have done better not to keep us waiting. Now we've missed everything all through you!"

Kolya said nothing.

"We're not too late, yet," said Filka, who was more experienced than the other two. "Up there it's light already, but down near the water it's still dark. What are you so sore about?"

"I'm sore because I can't bear very polite people," Tanya said to Filka. "I always feel they're trying to fool me."

"And as for me," Kolya said to Filka, "I can't stand cats, neither the kind that go fishing nor the kind that go nowhere. But I'm not drawing any conclusions from this."

Filka, who hated quarrels more than anything, looked sadly at both of them.

"Why are you always fighting—in the classroom and here too? Let me tell you something: if you quarrel before hunting or fishing you had better stay at home. That's what my father always told me. And he knows what he's talking about."

Kolya shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know. . . . I never quarrel with her. She always starts it. And Father says we must be friends."

"We haven't got to be because Father says so," said Tanya.

Filka looked at her even more sorrowfully. Even Kolya was rather cast down by her words, although he did not show it.

"No, I don't agree," remarked Filka. "My father is a hunter and he isn't much of a talker. But whatever he does say is true."

"You see," said Kolya. "Even Filka, your trusty Sancho Panza, does not agree with you."

"Why Sancho Panza?" Tanya asked scoffingly. "Not because you have just read *Don Quixote*, by any chance?"

"No, I read *Don Quixote* long ago," Kolya replied unruffled. "But because, for one thing, he always carries your fishing rods and digs worms for you."

"That's because he's a thousand times nicer than you are," cried Tanya, blushing furiously. "Filka, don't give him any worms."

"Hell," thought Filka, "they talk about me as though I were a bear just killed, but I am still alive."

Kolya merely shrugged his shoulders again.

"I don't need your worms, I can dig some up on the bank and I'll find a place for myself. Keep your worms."

And he disappeared down the bank where the bushes and rocks hid him instantly from view. Only his footsteps could be heard for a long time on the path below.

Tanya gazed after him, long after he had disappeared.

A white fog rose from the river, crept toward her over the clay, the leaves, the grass and the sand. And a thick fog seemed to envelop her soul.

Filka looked at her pityingly but said nothing, because he did not know what to say. At last he could bear it no longer.

"What's the matter with you, Tanya, why are you always at him like that? I sit next to him in class and I know—why—no one can tell you anything bad of him. And neither can I. And he isn't a bit proud although he gets on better than the others, even better than you, and you always got top marks. I heard him myself speaking German to the German teacher. And he speaks French too. But no one in our class even knows he does. Why are you so nasty to him, then?"

Tanya did not reply. She walked on in silence toward the river which dreamed in the mist below. And the cat with her kittens picked their way carefully down the slope.

Filka walked beside her reflectively.

"Strange boy, Kolya," he thought. What did it matter if thousands of cats, millions of them went to the river to fish! But if they were with Tanya, was Filka any the worse for it? No, he didn't mind it a bit. And Tanya was a funny girl too! Let Kolya call him Sancho and Panza, if he liked—he had not heard anything bad about them, so what did he, Filka, care?

They climbed down the steep embankment to the river, down to the narrow little jetties where the fishing boats were moored, and they saw Kolya sitting on a plank in the very spot where the bream were always known to bite.

"He found the place for himself after all," Filka said gleefully, because in his heart he was glad.

He walked up to Kolya, looked into his tin can with the handful of empty earth at its rusty bottom and, turning his back so that Tanya should not see, he shook some earthworms into it.

Tanya had seen him just the same but she said nothing.

She took her own rod and worms, walked onto the jetty and sat down beside Kolya. Filka went a little further off, and chose a nice place for himself. He always preferred to be alone when hunting or fishing.

And for a minute, or perhaps more, the river took possession of the children and even of the cat and her kittens; they all stood gazing down fixedly at the water.

Something mysterious was happening in the depths of the river. It was as though some creature's breath was rising from the depths, as though some unseen hand, that had held it fast all through the night, had released it now; it crept along the surface of the river, trailing its long limbs behind it over the water. It was pursuing the sun poised in the sky. And the river itself grew lighter, the distance receded, and the depths were revealed. The fish began to rise; goodness, how they bit! Tanya had never seen anything like it.

But a fish can always tell when you are watching someone else's bait instead of your own. And at moments like these fish laugh at you and turn away from your line.

Tanya lifted her eyes every minute

to look at Kolya's line. And Kolya kept looking at hers. And the fear that the other might have the first catch tormented each and disturbed them so that the fish swallowed the bait and refused to be hooked.

Kolya was the first to acknowledge defeat. He rose, yawned and stretched himself so that his bones cracked.

"I knew nothing would come of it," he said aloud, addressing no one in particular. "This endless peering into the water makes you darn sleepy. It's better to do as Zhenya does and keep the stupid fish in a glass bowl."

"They must be stupid," Tanya said, very distinctly, "if they mistake ordinary glass for water."

Kolya had no retort ready. He merely walked along the plank without disturbing his rod. The planks sank a little under his tread. And Cossack, who had already managed to extract a few little fish with her paw, looked up at him warily. She moved aside to let him pass. At that moment, Oryol, one of the kittens, swayed on the wet plank and fell into the water with a gentle plop. Whether it had been too intent on the tadpoles that darted about beside the plank, or whether it had moved too close to the edge and lost its balance before it had time to put out its sharp claws, Tanya never knew. The kitten was already on the other side of the plank when she saw it and the current was bearing it swiftly away. The little thing gasped and fought for breath; the mother rushed back and forth along the wet sand, mewing piteously.

Tanya leapt to her feet, barely touching the planks, so light was she.

She jumped onto the bank and waded into the water. The river billowed out her blue dress, like the cup of a forest bluebell. The cat followed her into the water. Kolya stood where he was.

Tanya reached out and lifted the kitten out of the water. It looked smaller than a rat. Its ginger fur was soaked; it was scarcely breathing.

Tanya laid it down on the stones and the cat licked it assiduously.

Kolya stood quite still.

"You threw the kitten in on purpose. I saw you!" cried Tanya angrily.

Kolya said nothing.

"Maybe he is a coward?" thought Tanya.

And she stamped her foot at him.

But even this did not make him move. He could not utter a word. He was so astounded.

Tanya left him standing there and ran up the hill, her wet dress clinging to her knees.

Kolya caught up with her at the top of the hill near the fishers' huts and took her hand.

"Tanya," he said, breathing hard, "believe me, I didn't mean to do it . . . it was an accident, the kitten fell in himself."

"Let go!" she said, trying to pull her hand away. "I shan't fish any more. I'm going home."

"Then I'm going with you."

He dropped her hand; he had to take big strides in order to keep up with her.

"Don't follow me," cried Tanya. She halted at a rock against which a fisherman's hut was built.

"But you'll come to dinner, won't you?" Kolya asked softly. "It's a holiday. Papa will expect you. If you don't come he will say I have offended you."

"So that's what you're afraid of?" said Tanya, crouching up against the high rock.

"No, you are mistaken. I'm very fond of Papa and he will be upset. I don't want to upset him, I don't want you to upset him either. That's what you must understand."

"Keep quiet," she said, "I know very well what you mean. I shan't come to dinner today. I shall never come any more."

Then she turned to the left, and the wall of the fisherman's hut hid her from view.

Kolya sat down on the rock which was already warm from the sun, dry and warm with only one dark, wet spot where Tanya's wet dress had been pressed against it.

Kolya touched the spot.

"Funny little girl, Tanya," he thought, as Filka had done. "Surely she doesn't think I'm a coward? Funny girl," he decided, "you can never tell what she will do or say."

And laying his hand on the stone again, he fell into a reverie.

Filka in the meantime had seen nothing. He sat on the clay beach behind a bend in the river and dragged in flat fish with black beady eyes, and a carp with a large head which he straightway killed with a blow of a sharp stone.

After that he decided to take a rest. He glanced up at the plank and saw two rods swaying over the water, the lines were strained, the fish were biting. But there was no one in sight, neither Kolya nor Tanya. And the flinty path was deserted.

He even looked up at the hills. But only the wind roamed there in an empty sky, void even of autumnal clouds.

Only the wet cat and her kittens were ambling slowly and cautiously up the slope.

IX

Tanya came to dinner after all. She climbed the steps and flung the glass doors wide open and entered, leaving her dog standing on the doorstep.

Tanya slammed the door sharply behind her. After all, it was her right to come to this house whenever she pleased. Her father lived here, didn't he. She was coming to see him. And no one need think she came for the sake of anyone else or anything else, such as, for instance, cherry pie.

Tanya slammed the door again, louder than ever before.

The door shivered in its frame, its glassy voice tinkling.

And Tanya entered the room and took her seat at the table.

Dinner was over and there was a bowl full of *pelmeny*— meat dumplings—on the table.

"Why, here you are, Tanya," shouted her father gaily. "And Kolya said you weren't coming today! Sit down quickly and eat. Eat plenty. Aunt Nadya has made some *pelmeny* for you today. Look how neatly Kolya has pasted them together."

"Oh," thought Tanya, "so he can do that as well?"

She looked at her father, at the wall, at Nadezhda Petrovna's kindly hands offering her now bread, and now meat, but she could not look at Kolya.

She sat bent over the table.

Kolya was sitting hunched up too. But there was a wry smile on his lips.

"Papa," he said, "why did you tell Tanya that I helped with the dumplings? Now she'll be sure not to eat them."

"Why, have you been quarreling, children?" the father asked in alarm.

"Oh no, Papa," replied Kolya, "we never quarrel. You said yourself that we must be friends."

"That's the idea," said the father.

Leaning over the table, Kolya whispered to Tanya:

"Who was it said she wasn't coming to dinner today?"

"I didn't come to dinner at all," Tanya replied aloud. "I don't want anything to eat. No, thanks, I'm not a bit hungry," she insisted, as her father and his wife pressed her to eat.

"How's that?" asked her father in surprise. "And what about the *pelmeny*?"

"No, thank you, I had dinner with Mamma."

"Don't ask her the third time, Papa," Kolya said mockingly, "she won't eat them, anyway."

"Well, well," remarked the father regretfully, "if she won't, she won't. But it's a pity, the *pelmeny* are so delicious!"

Oh, of course, they were darn delicious, those little bits of boiled dough filled with pink meat which these silly people insisted on flavoring with vinegar. Crazy people, why, no one flavored *pelmeny* with vinegar. You ate them with milk and sprinkled pepper on them and swallowed them like a magic fire that instantly set your blood aglow.

Tanya's thoughts rushed through her brain like little whirlwinds, although she continued to gaze down solemnly at the plate on which the *pelmeny* were growing cold. And her head felt giddy because she had eaten nothing at home and because she had a strong frame and strong arms and legs; only her heart did not know what it wanted. And now she had come here like a blind creature to this house, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, beyond the throbbing of her pulses.

Perhaps it might calm her to introduce a learned subject.

"Papa," she said suddenly, "is it true that the herrings in the sea are salty? That's what Kolya told me. He doesn't believe in zoology at all."

"What's that, I don't understand?" asked her father, looking up at her question.

Kolya stopped eating. He wiped his lips with the back of his hand and his face wore an expression of complete amazement. He had never said anything of the kind. But his astonishment faded rapidly because he had just remembered that only this morning he had decided not to let anything Tanya said or did ever surprise him any more.

And a moment later he was looking calmly across the table at Tanya with the clear eyes that held a flicker of amusement in their depths.

"No, I don't," he admitted. "What is science after all: a cat has four legs and a tail."

A flush spread over Tanya's forehead and cheeks. She knew very well what he meant.

"And what do you like?" she asked.

"I like mathematics; and I like literature," he added, "that's a dainty subject."

"Dainty!" repeated Tanya. And although her soul inclined to the arts and she herself loved Dickens and Walter Scott, and Krylov and Gogol even more, she said scornfully:

"'The donkey saw the nightingale,' I suppose—what sort of a science is that?"

They continued in this wise, not smiling at their own sallies, their eyes filled with scorn of one another, until their father, who could not grasp the meaning of their dispute, said:

"Children, stop talking nonsense, I can't understand you."

And Tanya felt dizzier and dizzier, and there was a loud throbbing in her ears. Being only a child after all, she wanted to eat. Hunger tormented her. It tore at her breast and her brain and penetrated, it seemed, every drop of blood.

She closed her eyes so that she should not see the food. When she opened them again she saw that the table was being cleared. The bowl of *pelmeny* had been taken away, and so had the bread and the crystal salt cellar. Only her plate stood untouched in front of her. Nadezhda Petrovna was about to take that away too when Tanya involuntarily touched it with her hand; she immediately cursed her hand for doing so.

"Shall I leave the *pelmeny* then?" asked Nadezhda Petrovna.

"No, no, I only wanted to give a few to my dog, if I may?"

"Go ahead," said her father, "give him the whole plate if you want."

Sticking a few cold *pelmeny* on the end of her fork Tanya went outside. And here squatting on the step beside her old dog she ate them quickly one after the other, washing each one with her bitter tears.

The dog barked loudly in blank incomprehension. And the noise he made prevented Tanya from hearing the steps behind her. She suddenly felt her father's hand around her shoulders. He looked closely at her eyes, and her lashes. No, she wasn't crying.

"I saw it all through the glass door," he said. "What's the matter with you, my little Tanya? What's your trouble, darling?"

He raised her and held her as if he wanted to take the burden of his daughter's sorrow upon himself and feel its weight. She watched him without appearing to do so. He seemed very big and far away, like the tall trees that she could not take in at one glance. She could only touch the bark on their trunks.

She leaned lightly against his shoulder.

"Tell me all about it, Tanya. Perhaps I can help you. What is troubling you, what is on your mind?"

But she said nothing because what she was thinking was: "I have a mother and a home and a dinner and even a dog and a cat, but I have no father after all."

But could she have told him that as she sat there on his knee?

Had she told him, would his expression not have changed, would he not perhaps have paled, as he—brave man that he was—had never paled even before an attack?

But how was she to know then that, sleeping or waking, the thought of her never left him now? That he uttered her name—the name he had forgotten for so many years—fondly and lingeringly? That even at this moment, holding her close to him, he was thinking: "My happiness has passed me by, for I never rocked her in my arms." But how could she know all this?

She merely nestled close to him, leaning against his breast.

But ah, how sweet it was to nestle against a father's breast.

Although it was not spring now and it was damp out here after the cold rains, and a little bit shivery in thin clothes, yet even on this late autumn evening Tanya felt warm. She sat with her father for a long while, until her own beloved constellation shone out over the road to the fortress, over the lime-spattered pathway, over the house with the glass doors.

X

Even a tree may be regarded as a reasonable being if it smiles at you in spring when it is decked out in foliage, if it says "good morning" to you when you come into the classroom and take your seat at the desk. And you find yourself saying "good morning" t

the tree although it stands outside the window in the back yard where the fuel is kept.

The tree was bare of leaves now. But even without them it was beautiful. Its live branches stretched skywards and its bark was black.

Tanya did not know whether it was an elm, or an ash, or some other tree. The snow was falling now, the first snow that plopped blindly on the bark and the branches; but it could not gain a hold. It melted almost as soon as it touched the branches.

"That means there is some warmth in it just as there is in me and in others," thought Tanya, with a little nod to the tree outside the window.

Kolya was at the blackboard, beside Alexandra Ivanovna, telling her about the old woman Izergil.

His was a thoughtful face with gay, clear eyes and a high forehead, and the words that left his lips seemed alive.

The teacher was thinking with a thrill of pleasure that she need have no fear this new boy would spoil her class.

"I have seen Gorky, you know," he said all of a sudden, blushing furiously as he did so, for he could not endure the slightest suggestion of boasting.

The children understood his confusion.

"Tell us about it!" they shouted from their seats.

"Yes, that is very interesting," said Alexandra Ivanovna. "Where did you see him? Perhaps you talked to him too?"

"No, I only saw him through the trees in the garden. It was in the Crimea. But I don't remember very well. I was only ten when Papa took me there."

"And what was Gorky doing in the garden?"

"He was lighting a fire beside the pathway."

"Tell us what you can remember."

But he remembered very little.

He spoke about the mountainous land in the south where the rough, dark leaves of the vine peeped over the stone walls by the grey, sun-baked roads. And donkeys brayed in the mornings.

But the children listened to him spellbound.

Tanya alone seemed to hear nothing. She looked out of the window at the first snow clinging to the naked tree, that had begun to shiver.

"Vines, vines," thought Tanya. "And I have seen nothing but firs and pines all my life."

And she tried hard to picture to herself, not a vine, but at least an apple tree in full bloom, or a tall pear tree, or even yellow wheat growing in the fields. And her imagination conjured up visions of flowers and trees she had never seen.

The teacher, standing with her elbow resting on the window sill, had been watching her for some time. This girl, whom she loved more than the others, had begun to cause her some uneasiness.

"Surely she isn't thinking of gay parties? Her memory is as good as ever, yet her expression is absent and last time she got lower marks for history than usual."

"Tanya Sabaneyeva, you are not attending."

With an effort Tanya tore her gaze away from the window, and the dreaminess in them had not faded when she rose to her feet. She was still far away. She had not yet returned from her visionary land.

"What have you to say?"

"His talk is uninteresting."

"That's not true. It is very interesting and we are all listening with pleasure. Were *you* ever in the Crimea and did you ever see Maxim

Gorky, just imagine, Maxim Gorky alive!"

"My father never took *me* there!" said Tanya in a tremulous voice.

"All the more reason why you ought to be listening."

"I shan't listen to him."

"But why not?"

"Because it has nothing to do with our Russian language and literature lesson."

God knows what she was saying.

The teacher moved slowly away from the window. Her tread, usually so light, now sounded heavy. She was annoyed; she walked up to Tanya, the garnet star glittering formidably on her bosom.

Tanya stood meekly waiting.

"Tell your father to come and see me tomorrow," said Alexandra Ivanovna.

She cast a stern look at Tanya, at her flaming forehead and lips and was amazed to see how suddenly the blood drained from the lips that had uttered such insolent words.

"I shall tell my mother, she'll come," Tanya said in low tones.

The teacher hesitated. "What is going on inside her?" she wondered. The complete answer was not to be found in Tanya's words. "Why does this boy seem to affect her so strongly?"

She resolved to go to Tanya's home. She touched Tanya's fingers.

"You cannot deceive me by your insolence. No one need come to speak to me about you. I forgive you this time. But remember, you did not behave like a Pioneer just now. You did not mean what you said. And you have always been so honest and fair. I can't understand what has come over you."

She walked away still annoyed and sat down at her desk.

The class sat silent, without stirring; then Zhenya turned round so abruptly that she nearly dislocated her plump neck.

"Tanya's in love with him, that's all," she whispered to Filka.

He kicked her in reply.

What could you do if this fatty was so stupid, if there was no imagination whatsoever inside that curly head of hers.

And Tanya stood there, holding onto the desk. Her fingers trembled uncontrollably and she would doubtless have fallen had her will been as powerless as her fettered tongue.

"Sit down," Alexandra Ivanovna bade her.

"May I sit at another desk?"

"Why, are you not comfortable beside Zhenya?"

"No, it's not that," said Tanya, "the tree outside always distracts my attention."

"Sit wherever you please, you strange child!"

So Tanya sat down at an empty desk.

"Kolya, you may sit down, too," said the teacher.

She had forgotten about him, her mind was full of Tanya. But even now that she remembered him he did not move. He stood leaning forward a little as though his feet were planted, not on a level floor but on a steep track leading up a mountain; his face was flushed and his obstinate eyes were narrowed.

"All right, Kolya," the teacher said. "Sit down. I shall give you 'excellent' marks."

"May I take Tanya Sabaneyeva's place?"

"Why, what has come over you children?"

She consented, however, and, out of sheer stubbornness, he sat down beside Zhenya.

Tanya remained alone. She looked up at the window, hoping that she would not see the tree. But it was clearly visible from where she sat. The first snow already covered the branches where they sprang from the trunk. It was not melting any more. The first snow whirled about the tree top that vanished into the misty sky.

XI

"If a man is left alone he risks taking the wrong trail," thought Filka as he stood all alone in the deserted street along which he and Tanya usually went home from school.

He had waited a whole hour for her at the corner, beside the stall kept by a Chinese. Perhaps the cakes of sweetened dough heaped up on the stall, or perhaps the Chinese himself in his wooden clogs had distracted Filka's attention. At any rate he was quite alone now and Tanya must have gone off by herself and this was equally bad for both of them.

In the forest Filka would have known what to do. He would have followed her trail. But here in town he might be mistaken for a bloodhound and people would laugh at him.

And so Filka came to the bitter conclusion that he knew many things that were useless to him in the town.

He knew, for instance, how to track a sable down in the powdery, new-fallen snow near the forest brook; he knew that if bread is frozen by morning in the pantry it is time to bring out the dog-teams, for the ice will bear the sleigh; and that if the wind blows from Black Bluff when the moon is at the full, there will be a storm.

But here in town no one ever looked at the moon. People read the papers to find out whether the ice on the river was firm enough and when a storm was brewing they hung a flag on the watch-tower or fired the cannon.

As for Filka, he was made to solve arithmetical problems instead of tracking down animals in the snow, made to track down subjects and predicates in sentences where even the best hunter in camp would find no trace of them.

But this time Filka was going to do as he pleased. Let them think he was a dog, let them laugh at him if they wished.

Filka squatted down in the middle of the street and studied all the footprints in the snow. It was a good thing that this was the first snow, that it was new fallen and that almost no one went by this road.

Filka rose to his feet and started off without raising his eyes from the ground. He was as certain now of the people who had passed along the road as if he had seen them. There were Tanya's lonely tracks by the fence—she must have gone ahead by herself, stepping as carefully as she could so as to avoid trampling this first fine snow. There were the marks of Zhenya's galoshes and Kolya's boots—he took short steps but his stubborn nature lent them firmness.

But how strangely they had behaved! They had turned round and stopped short, allowing Tanya to walk ahead and then they had caught up with her again. It looked as though they had been laughing at her, the nasty things! And she had gone on and on, with a troubled heart. These were not the kind of footprints she left on Filka's yard or on the sand by the river, when they went fishing together.

But where had she gone?

Tanya's footprints ended suddenly at a spot by the fence where there was neither doorstep nor gateway.

She must have soared into the air like a swallow, or perhaps this very air, darkened by the first snow, had drawn her upward like a leaf and was now whirling and tossing her amid the clouds. She could not have jumped over a fence as high as this.

Filka paused for a second, then

followed the tracks of Zhenya and Kolya; they kept side by side at first, but at the corner they parted, none too pleased with themselves and each other.

"They quarreled," thought Filka and turned back, laughing.

He paused for a while beside the fence, and considered Tanya's footprints. He touched the top of the fence with his hand.

"Aha, there is a bit here on the edge that you can get hold of. And Tanya has strong legs," Filka said to himself. "But mine ought to be twice as strong; if they aren't our gym instructor can bury me alive."

And, flinging over his satchel of books first, Filka cleared the fence at a bound that evoked from a passing crone a startled exclamation that it was the devil himself.

But Filka did not hear her. He was over the fence by that time, following Tanya's tracks, which led him through someone's vegetable garden.

At the end of the garden he climbed over another fence, not quite as high as the last, and found himself in a little grove not far from home. Here he skirted some low bushes which had dropped their scarlet berries on the snow, and peeped into the wood. All dazzling white with the satiny bark of the birches and the fresh snow, it seemed to him a fantasy, an enchanted dreamland, unknown even to him who knew the woods so well. Every bough was sharply defined, as though touched up with chalk, the tree trunks seemed to smoke through the frost glinting like sparks on the bark. In this silver grove, as motionless as the trees that were silent sentinels in the stillness, Tanya stood weeping. She did not hear the pad of his footsteps nor the rustle of the branches as he moved them aside.

Filka stepped back behind the bushes that screened him like a wall and sat down on the snow for a while. Then he crept quietly away and strode noiselessly out of the grove.

"If a man is left alone," Filka thought once more, "he may of course strike the wrong trail—he may even follow the trail like a dog and jump over fences and peer out from behind bushes at others. But if he weeps alone it is better to let him be. Let him weep."

And making a wide detour, Filka turned into a side street and walked up to the gate of Tanya's house. He opened it and entered the house boldly, as he had never done before.

The old nurse asked him what he wanted.

He told her that he wanted to tell Tanya's mother that as there was a study circle in school today, Tanya would be late.

The old woman showed him to the inner room.

Filka pushed the door slightly open, but closed it again at once.

For on the red couch beside Tanya's mother sat Alexandra Ivanovna, the schoolteacher.

She had her arm around the mother's shoulders, and she was telling her something, and both were holding tiny white handkerchiefs with which from time to time they dabbed their eyes.

Could they be grieving about something, too?

Filka retreated, but so noiselessly that not even the stiff floor mats creaked under his feet.

Yes, he knew many things that were quite useless to him in the town. He knew the voices of the beasts, the roots of the grasses, the depth of the water, he even knew that one should not fill in the joints of a log-house in the woods with felt because the birds would pluck out the hair for their nests. But when people cried together instead

of laughing he did not know what to do. It was better for him, surely, to let them weep and busy himself meanwhile with his dogs because it was winter already and the ice would soon rise above the water and gleam green like brass in the moonlight.

XII

It snowed almost until the winter vacation; it started and stopped, started and stopped again until it had snowed up the whole town. Housewives had difficulty in opening the window-shutters, and trenches had to be dug along the sidewalks. The road piled up high. And the snow kept falling, holding the river and the mountains in thrall. And only in one spot was it frustrated; stamped down by children's feet on the school playground, it clung fast to the ground in a firm smooth mass that you could mold into any shape you liked.

For several days in succession, during the long recreation interval, Tanya had been busy modeling a snow man.

She had finished it today. The little boys who had been helping her took away the ladder and set it against the fence, and stood the bucket of water to one side. Tanya retired a few paces to survey her work.

It was the figure of a sentinel. He wore a helmet and had broad shoulders like her father's and altogether there was something of her father's bearing about him. He stood there as though on the edge of the world, leaning on his rifle and gazing into the distance, and before him lay the dark sea. Of course, there wasn't any sea, really. But the impression was so vivid that the children grouped around the figure were dumbstruck for a while. Then the older boys stole up behind Tanya, lifted her bodily and swung her into the air, with wild shouts. The other girls squealed, though no one thought of touching them. But Tanya did not even cry out. She was merely rather embarrassed to think that her sentinel had turned out so well. She had not thought much about it. She had merely caught at the idea and held it fast until her fingers had added the final touch to the rifle and covered it with a coating of glittering ice. And now her fingers ached with the cold water and the snow, and she put them in her mouth to warm them.

Kolya stood a little way off, never moving a step nearer Tanya.

Alexandra Ivanovna, attracted by the clamor, came out and stood there without her coat in front of the snow sentinel. She was amazed by its beauty.

Frost whitened the surface nape of her black dress, the garnet star on her breast grew dim, and still she stood there, thinking of her own childhood. Once she too had made snow figures. She could remember one of them quite well. It was the figure of a woman and it had stood in the corner of the yard near the garbage heap. That night, when the yard and the brick walls and the garbage can were flooded with moonlight the snow figure was a weird sight. Around her bloated white head, relieved only by a smudge of charcoal for a mouth, a misty halo swam. And, chancing to catch sight of her through the window one night, Alexandra Ivanovna had been so startled that she had burst into tears. No one knew why she cried. But she had not been able to fall asleep from fright. All night long she had been haunted by the memory of the snow woman in the moonlight, looking like the fantasy of some evil being.

And now, twenty years later, the teacher glanced around her, dreading to see the snow woman of her childhood. But no, there were other figures in the playground today; not all so skillfully executed as Tanya's sentinel, but nevertheless recognizable warriors, heroes; there was even a titan of old on horseback. Fantasy, lofty and naive, peopled the school yard.

"Is this your work?" she asked Tanya. Tanya nodded and took her fingers out of her mouth.

"You are cold, Alexandra Ivanovna," she said. "Your little star has lost all its lustre. May I touch it?"

Tanya rubbed the star with her fingers and it shone out again as bravely as ever.

"Shall I give it to you as a reward for modeling your sentinel so well?" said the teacher.

Tanya was shocked at the very thought of such a thing.

"No, please don't, Alexandra Ivanovna. We couldn't imagine you without your star. I wouldn't want to rob the others of it."

And Tanya ran off toward the gates where Filka stood beckoning to her.

The teacher walked slowly back to the building, thinking of Tanya as she went. How sad and absent she had been lately; yet there was something vaguely beautiful about everything she did. Perhaps it was the breath of love that had touched her?

"Well, well, there's nothing terrible about that," thought the teacher with a smile. But what was she so busy chewing over there? Surely they hadn't been buying that disgusting resin from the Chinese again! Yes, sure enough! Oh, sweet young love whose pangs could still be moderated by resin!

The teacher laughed softly to herself and walked away.

Filka had bought a whole chunk of spruce-resin from the Chinese and was sharing it generously with the other children. He offered it right and left, but he didn't offer any to Zhenya.

"Why don't you give me some?" cried Zhenya.

"Filka, don't give the girls any," said the boys, although they all knew how generous he was.

"Why not?" was Filka's retort. "I'll give her the biggest piece. But she must come over here."

Zhenya came up to him and stretched out her hand.

Filka took a small paper packet from his pocket and laid it carefully on her open palm.

"Oh, you're giving me much too much," Zhenya remarked in some surprise.

She unwrapped the paper.

A tiny newborn mouse sat shivering miserably on her hand. She dropped it on the ground with a squeal and the girls fled in all directions.

The mouse crouched on the snow, shivering violently.

"What are you doing?" Tanya exclaimed angrily. "It'll freeze to death!"

She bent down and picked up the mouse and warmed it in her hands. Then she put it inside her coat.

At that moment a man none of them had ever seen before walked up to the group. He wore a Siberian hat of fox fur and a heavy traveling coat. But he was ill-shod. And they all noticed this at once.

"Someone's just arrived," said Filka. "A stranger."

"Yes, he's not from these parts," the others agreed.

Everyone looked at the man as he approached. And one little girl even ran up to him and tugged at his coat.

"Say Comrade, are you the inspector?" she piped.

He walked up to the group where Tanya was and said:

"Tell me, children, where can I find your director?"

The children retreated. He might be the inspector after all.

"Why don't you want to tell me?" he said. Then he appealed to Tanya. "Perhaps *you* will come and show me where he is, little girl?"

Tanya looked round, thinking he meant someone else.

"No, I mean you, the little girl with the grey eyes, the one who picked up the mouse."

Tanya looked at him with very wide eyes, and went on noisily chewing her resin. The mouse peeped out from his warm nest under her coat collar.

The man smiled at the mouse, and then Tanya spat out the resin and led the way to the director's office.

"Who could that be?" Kolya asked.

"It must be the inspector from Vladivostok," someone said.

And suddenly Filka shouted in an awed voice:

"He's a hero, I swear! I saw a Banner on his chest."

XIII

The stranger turned out to be a writer whose name was fairly well known. But why on earth had he come to this town in winter without warm felt boots? His boots weren't even made of cowhide sewn with cowgut like those the men from the goldfields wore, but ordinary grey canvas that could not possibly keep his feet warm. True, he had a long, warm overcoat and a hat of red fox fur. He had worn this coat and hat at the border guards' club. They said he had been born in this town and had actually attended the school he visited that day.

Perhaps he had wished to recall the days when he had been a boy here; let the wind blow ever so cold in his face, let the snow cling to his eyelashes—it was the familiar wind and snow of his childhood. Or perhaps he had wanted to hear what the young trees that had grown up since his time were whispering on the banks of his river. Or perhaps he was tired of his fame in Moscow and had decided to come here to rest, like those great, watchful birds that hovered all day high over the estuary and then, as if wearied by the dizzy height, descended to the stunted firs on the shores to rest in the stillness.

But Tanya thought differently.

He might not be Gorky, she thought to herself, he might not be anyone remotely resembling that great writer, but at any rate he had come here, to her home, to this distant land of hers, where even she could see him with her own eyes and, perhaps, touch his coat with her hand.

He was small and slightly built. He had grey hair and a high-pitched voice that somehow amazed her.

She was only afraid that he might ask her whether she liked Pushkin or whether she had read his own books.

But he did not. All he said was: "Thank you, my dear. What are you going to do with the mouse?"

And although he did not say very much he caused them quite a bit of trouble.

Once every ten days Alexandra Ivanovna would preside over a literary circle in the evening after lessons.

They would all gather around a long table in the Pioneer room

and Alexandra Ivanovna would sit in an armchair. At times like these she seemed a different person, as though she had arrived to them on an invisible ship from some other land.

With her chin resting on her interlacing fingers she would begin to read.

"When the yellow rye-fields billow in the breezes
And the fresh woods tremble to the wind's low drum. . ."

Then she would pause awhile.

"No, I didn't intend to read this one to you today. Listen to this instead:"

And from my mouth the Seraph wrung
Forth by its roots my sinful tongue;
The evil things and vain it bobbled
His hand drew forth and so effaced,
And the wise serpent's tongue he placed
Between my lips with hand blood-dobbled. . .".

"I want you so much to understand how beautiful a poet's words can be, what wondrous images they evoke."

But Filka could not understand anything; he was ready to tear his own tongue out in sheer exasperation at its being able to do nothing better than waggle against his teeth, and help him to chew whatever he put in his mouth, but never to compose a line of verse like that.

Then Zhenya would recite poems she had written about border guards and Tanya would read stories. Kolya always criticized, impartially and brutally, but he never wrote anything himself for fear of writing badly.

Last time Tanya had read them a story she had made up about a little mouse that had made a nest in the sleeve of an old fur coat. One day, when the coat was taken out of the wardrobe into the frosty yard to air, the mouse saw snow for the first time. "It's a shame for people to walk on it, why, it's sugar!" thought the mouse and jumped out of the sleeve. Poor little mouse! Where would he live now?

This time Kolya said nothing nasty. To Tanya his silence signified approval and all that day and even at night, in her dreams, she felt happy. But next morning she tore up her story and threw it away.

"To think," she reflected in disgust, "that the mere silence of this insolent boy is enough to make me happy."

But the literature circle was different today.

An unusual excitement reigned over the little gathering. Where were they to find flowers to present that evening to the writer? Where could flowers be obtained in winter under the snow when even the common mare's tail in the marshes, even the last blade of grass in the forest had withered?

They all racked their brains for a solution. Tanya, too, pondered the matter but could think of nothing. She had no more flowers in her garden.

Then plump little Zhenya, who always had plenty of common sense, made a suggestion.

"We have some asphodel in pots at home and they've just come out," she said.

"And our Chinese roses and fuchsias are blossoming too," chimed in the others.

"And ours . . ." Filka began but stopped the same instant because he knew very well that the woman where he lodged did not keep any flowers in the house. She kept a pig which his dogs were just aching to tear to pieces.

The problem of the flowers was settled. But another question arose. Who was to present them to him? Who would have the courage to mount the wooden stage

in the large, crowded school hall, lighted by forty bright lamps, shake the great man's hand and say: "On behalf of all the Pioneers . . ."

"Let Tanya do it," Filka's voice was heard above the clamor.

"No, Zhenya should do it!" cried the girls. "She gave us the idea about where to get the flowers."

But although the girls were right the boys argued the point. Only Kolya kept silent. And when Tanya, and not Zhenya, was finally chosen he covered his eyes with his hand so that no one could tell what he had wanted.

"Very well," said Alexandra Ivanovna, "you will go onto the platform, Tanya, walk up to the guest, shake hands with him and present him with the flowers. You will tell him what we have decided. You have a good memory so I don't need to coach you any more. Take the flowers now and go and get ready because he will soon be here."

Tanya walked out of the room with the flowers in her hands.

This was justice at last! This would recompense her for all her heartache, Tanya thought, clasping the flowers close to her. To think that she and none other would shake hands with the famous writer and give him the flowers, that she would be able to look at him as long as she pleased. And perhaps some day, many years hence—perhaps five—she would be able to tell her friends that she too had seen something of the great world.

She smiled at everyone, even at Zhenya, oblivious of the girl's spiteful glances.

"I don't think it's fair to have chosen Tanya Sabaneyeva," said Zhenya to her friends. "I'm not saying it because I wanted to be chosen—I'm not ambitious and I don't care a hoot about it one way or another. But it would have been better to have chosen Kolya. He is much cleverer than she is. Of course, it's easy enough to see through those boys. They just chose her because she has nice eyes. Even the writer noticed them."

"He only said they were grey," Kolya smiled. "But you are always right, Zhenya. They are nice. I bet you wouldn't mind having them, would you?"

"I wouldn't have them for any-thing!" was Zhenya's retort.

Tanya heard no more. And the flowers she was carrying felt as heavy as lead. She ran down the corridor past the classrooms, past the large hall where the children were noisily scrambling for seats and dragging chairs about.

She ran up the stairs into the gloom of the empty cloakroom and stopped to catch her breath. She had not yet learned how eloquent envy could be, she was still weak.

"Is it possible that she is right? But that would be unworthy of a Pioneer. Perhaps it would be better for me to refuse than to listen to such talk?"

Her limbs were trembling.

"No, it is not true," she decided. "It's all nonsense!"

Nevertheless she wanted to look at her eyes; she had not thought of them till now.

The cloakroom was quiet and deserted at this hour; here, as in the woods, twilight always reigned. A large old mirror, tilted slightly forward, hung on the white-washed wall. The black, polished wooden stand always trembled when the children ran past it. And then the mirror itself would swing, and like a bright cloud float toward them, reflecting a host of childish faces.

But now it hung motionless. The shelf below was piled with inkwells the janitor had just washed. And the ink stood beside them, some in ordinary-sized bot-

tles, some in a tall quart bottle with a label and more in a huge glass vessel. What a quantity of ink! Was so much really needed for the tip of Tanya's pen?

Picking her way carefully among the bottles that stood on the floor, Tanya walked up close to the mirror. She glanced round—the janitor was not in sight—and resting her elbows on the ledge of the frame she pressed her face against the glass. From the depths of the mirror, a shade lighter than the surrounding gloom, Tanya's eyes—grey like her mother's—looked out at her. They were wide open and shining, there were shadows in their depths; they seemed fathomless.

She stood thus for a few seconds in startled silence, like some wild thing in the forest, seeing its reflection for the first time. Then she heaved a sigh: "No. There's nothing particular about those eyes!"

With a feeling of regret she stepped back from the mirror and straightened herself.

The mirror repeated the movement, swaying on its stand; her reflection loomed out at her again. The bottle of ink tipped forward and rolled down among the empty inkwells. Tanya tried to catch it as it fell, but it slipped through her fingers, spouting and squirming dark liquid like an octopus. It fell to the floor with a heavy thud, like clods falling from the clay bank into the river.

Tanya had spilled the ink, a calamity that happens at least once in every little girl's life.

"Oh, look at that!" she cried.

She jumped back, one hand—the left, in which she held the flowers—raised high. Still, a few black splashes showed on the delicate petals of the Chinese roses. But that was nothing, she could pick off those few petals. But her other hand! Tanya looked at it in despair, first the palm, then the back; it was black and frightful right up to the wrist.

"That looks interesting!"

The voice sounded so close that for a moment Tanya thought she herself must have spoken.

She looked round.

There stood Kolya eyeing her hand.

"I wonder," he said, "how you will shake hands with the writer now! As a matter of fact, he has come and he's in the teachers' room. Everyone is waiting. Alexandra Ivanovna sent me to fetch you."

Tanya stood motionless for a few seconds and there was a look of suffering in the eyes that had just been peering so inquisitively into the mirror.

It was amazing how unlucky she was.

She held the flowers out to Kolya. She wanted to say:

"Here, take them, take even these away from me. Let Zhenya present them to the writer. She has just as good a memory as I have. And her tie is nicer than mine, it is a new silk one and I wash mine every day."

And he would have taken those flowers, and Zhenya and he would have laughed at her.

Tanya turned away from Kolya and ran past the rows of children's coats, marshaled like silent witnesses of her shame.

In the washroom she held her hand under the tap for a long time, and rubbed it hard with sand, but she could not get it clean.

"He'll tell, anyway! He'll tell Alexandra Ivanovna. He'll tell Zhenya and all of them."

So she would not go out on the stage this evening after all, she would not present the flowers and shake hands with the writer.

Yes, it was surprising how un-

lucky she was with flowers, when she loved them so much. Once she had given them to a sick boy who turned out to be Kolya and didn't deserve them in the least, even though they were only martagon lilies. And now look what had happened to these delicate flowers that only bloomed indoors. Had they fallen into the hands of some other girl—how many wonderful things might have happened to them! But now she would have to give them up.

Tanya shook the drops of water from her hand, and without bothering to dry it, walked slowly and dejectedly out of the cloakroom.

For why should she hurry; nothing mattered now!

She mounted the steps which had a strip of brass on the edges, and, gazing moodily out of the windows, wandered down the corridor. Perhaps she would catch a glimpse of the tree from which she had so often drawn comfort. No, it was not to be seen. It grew under other windows, on the other side of the building. Then the writer crossed the corridor.

She looked away from the window for a second and saw him.

He was hurrying along in his canvas boots. He was coatless and wore a long Caucasian blouse with a high neckband and a narrow leather belt around the waist. And his silvery hair shone, the silver on his belt shone and there were more buttons on his long blouse than Tanya could count.

In another moment he would turn the corner of the corridor and be lost to Tanya forever.

"Comrade!" she cried out in desperation.

He stopped. He turned as if on springs, and walked back to meet her, swinging his arms. He wrinkled his forehead as if wondering why this child could have stopped him. Surely she wasn't bringing him flowers. What a lot of flowers he was given! He did not even glance at them.

"Tell me, Comrade, are you kind?"

He bent forward and looked into her face.

"Are you, tell me," Tanya implored, and taking his hand she led him further down the deserted corridor.

"Comrade, are you kind?" she repeated.

What could he reply?

"What is it, my friend?"

"If you are kind, please, please don't offer me your hand this evening."

"Why, have you done something wrong?"

"Oh, no, it isn't that! That's not what I wanted to say. I am to present flowers to you after you have talked to us in the big hall and to thank you on behalf of all the Pioneers. Then you'll want to shake hands with me. But I can't. Something awful has happened. Look!"

And she showed him her hand—a slim hand with long fingers, all covered with ink.

He sat down on the windowsill and laughed, drawing Tanya close to him.

And his laugh surprised her even more than his voice—it was still higher and more musical.

"Most likely he sings quite well," Tanya thought. "But will he do as I ask?"

"Very well, I shall do as you ask," he told her.

Then he went away, still laughing to himself, and swinging his arms in a peculiar way he had.

It was an amusing moment in his long journey. It delighted him and he felt quite gay as he stood before the children on the platform. He sat down as close to them as he could and began to read to them before the hubbub

of welcome had died down. And Tanya, sitting in the front row, listened gratefully to his words. He read them the story of a farewell between father and son, a very sad farewell indeed; they were parting—each to his duty. The high voice that had surprised Tanya so much when she first heard it now sounded quite different. Brassy notes, like the trumpet call that makes the stones echo—notes that Tanya loved better than those drawn from stringed instruments—sounded in his voice.

Now he had finished. The children were clapping and cheering but Tanya dared not take her hands out of the pocket of her rough woolen sweater. The flowers were lying on her knees.

She looked at Alexandra Ivanovna, waiting for a signal from her.

The clapping subsided and the writer closed his book and moved away from the table; Alexandra Ivanovna nodded to Tanya.

She ran up the creaking steps without taking her hand out of her pocket. She hurried at first then slowed down and finally stopped. And he looked into her shining eyes, and made no movement.

"He has forgotten," thought Tanya, "what shall I do now?" And a shiver ran down her spine.

"On behalf of all the Pioneers and schoolchildren," she began in a faint voice.

No, he had not forgotten. He did not give her time to finish her speech. He strode up to her and, standing between her and the rest, took the flowers from her tightly-clenched fist and laid them on the table. Then he embraced her as if she were his daughter and together they descended the stage into the hall. He did not let anyone come near her until the children surrounded them.

A small girl stood in front of them shouting:

"Are you a real live writer?"

"Yes, a real, live one!" he replied.

"I've never seen one before. I never thought they looked like you."

"What did you think they looked like?"

"I always thought they were fat."

He squatted down in front of the small girl and was lost among the children like one blade of grass among others. They touched him and fussed around him; never had fame sounded so sweet in his ears as the children's shouts that nearly deafened him.

For a second he covered his eyes with his hand.

Tanya stood beside him, almost touching his shoulder. And all at once she felt someone tugging at her hand, the one she had hidden far down in her pocket. She gave a startled exclamation and turned around. Kolya was holding her wrist and pulling it toward him with all his might. She struggled, bending her elbow until she could endure it no longer. Kolya drew her hand out of her pocket but he did not raise it up for all to see, as Tanya had dreaded; instead he held it fast in both of his.

"Tanya," he said softly, "I was so afraid for you. I thought they would laugh at you. But you were a brick! Don't be angry with me, please don't. I want so much to dance with you at the school fir tree party."

There was not a trace of his usual sneering tone, nor his stubbornness.

He laid his hand on her shoulder as though the dancing had already begun, and they were whirling round together.

She flushed and looked at him in confusion. A tender smile illumined her face, her eyes, her lips. She had completely forgotten her

troubles and for a few seconds her slim, ink-stained, girlish hand rested on his shoulder.

Filka stole up from behind and flung his arms round both. He looked searchingly at Tanya and then at Kolya and this time his carefree countenance showed no pleasure.

"So you've made it up," he said.

Tanya took her hand off Kolya's shoulder and it dropped limply at her side.

"Don't be silly, Filka," she said, blushing deeper. "He simply asked me to invite him to my house tomorrow night for the fir tree. I am not inviting him. But he can come if he wants to."

"Oh, yes," sighed Filka, "it's the New Year tomorrow. I had nearly forgotten that it's a holiday. I'll come to see you and bring my father, may I?"

"Of course," Tanya replied quickly. "Perhaps we will have some fun. You come too," she said to Kolya, touching his sleeve lightly.

Filka pushed himself between them and the crowd of children followed him, separating the two like a broad river.

XIV

The New Year always came in quietly, without any blizzards; sometimes there was a clear sky, sometimes a faint mist that glowed at every twinkle of the stars. And above the mist, in a huge circle spreading over half the sky, the moon sailed high.

Tanya loved this night more than the warmest night in summer. For on New Year's Eve she was permitted to stay up all night. It was her particular holiday. True, she had not been born exactly on the eve of the New Year, but somewhat earlier. But what did that matter? A holiday is a holiday when it is your own and when everyone around you is rejoicing. And on a night like this no one ever went to bed. They shoveled the snow off the pavements and went visiting. Their footsteps scrunched on the snow and their singing could be heard at the dead of night.

That day her mother did not go out to work. When Tanya came home from school, she shouted gaily before she had crossed the threshold:

"Stop! Don't make any pies without me."

Her mother stood in the middle of the room with her hands deep in the dough. She would throw them back like widespread wings ready to lift her into the air. But she kept her feet on the ground. She bent over Tanya, and kissed her on the brow and said:

"A happy New Year, and a happy holiday, Tanya! We haven't started yet, dear. We were waiting for you."

Tanya threw her books onto the shelf and hurried off to put on her old dress with the black polka-dots. It was much too small for her now. She had grown so much that year that her body filled it out like the sea breeze fills the sails in fair weather. And the mother, glancing at Tanya's young shoulders, shook her head.

"How you've grown, how you've grown!"

Tanya, heedless of the dough, caught her mother's hands behind her back, lifted her up a little from the ground and carried her across the whole room.

"You'll hurt yourself," the mother cried in fear.

But her mother was light. Lighter than a bundle of dried grasses was this burden to Tanya. Carefully she put her down and

both looked up in embarrassment at the old nurse who was watching them from the doorway.

"You're both crazy," she said sternly. "Have you forgotten the dough?"

The pleasantest hours of the day followed. All that Tanya and her guests were to eat that evening she made herself. She crushed the black poppy-seeds, and pressed out the white juice that looked like dandelion-milk. She ran every minute to the pantry, where the cold was intense. The cold had transformed everything that stood in the pantry, altering the very nature of each object. Meat grew hard as stone so that Tanya had to saw off pieces with a small saw. And milk lay in chunks on the shelf. She crushed it with a knife, and it split up into long filaments and a dust that resembled white resin. Then she brought in the bread which had turned hoary and seemed dead. But Tanya knew that it was alive, that everything in her pantry lived. Nothing died. She put the bread and the meat on the fire and life returned to them. The meat grew soft and gave forth a strong juice, the milk was covered with a thick foam and the bread began to breathe once more.

Afterwards Tanya took her skis and went off to the woods. She glided down the steep slope to where the snow was so deep that only the crowns of young spruce peeped through. She chose one, the youngest of them all, with needles a deeper blue than the others. She cut it down with a sharp knife and carried it home on her shoulder.

Tanya placed the little tree on a low stool. Small as it was, Tanya found on it a few drops of the resin she loved to chew. And the pungent smell of it lingered in the house.

The decorations on the tree were not profuse. On its hazy blue needles gleamed the golden wire that held the candles; silver tanks crept up its branches and golden stars descended on parachutes. That was all.

But what a happy day it always was for her! Guests came and Tanya loved to have friends around her. And mother played the gramophone she had brought from the hospital.

It ought to be even better than usual this time. For Father was coming—and Kolya. . . . But would he come?

"I am afraid I have offended him again," Tanya thought. Why? What amazing creatures people must be if two words spoken by that silly boy Filka could cloud their pleasure, and kill the kind words that were about to spring from the heart, and snatch away the hand stretched out in friendship!

And Tanya wanted to look at the shoulder on which Kolya's hand had rested that day for a few seconds.

There was nothing to be seen on her shoulder.

But when she turned her head she met her mother's steady gaze.

Her mother was holding her school diary. Not everywhere in that exercise-book were the marks as good as they had been formerly. But this time her mother said nothing. And the gaze that rested on her daughter was pensive and sad as though it were not Tanya she saw but the tiny creature she had once rocked in her arms.

Her mother was already dressed in her best black silk frock. And how proudly she held her head today, how thick and shining the hair was at the nape of her neck. Could there be anyone on earth more sweet and beautiful than she?

"Why can't Papa understand that?" Tanya thought.

A few wisps of cotton-wool were clinging to her mother's dress. Tanya blew them off.

"Father will be here soon," she said.

"Yes, I am expecting him," her mother replied. "And Nadezhda Petrovna as well. I asked her to come."

"Oh, it would be better if she didn't!" Tanya exclaimed involuntarily.

"Why not, Tanya?" the mother asked.

"She shouldn't."

"But why, you silly child?"

Instead of replying Tanya seized her mother and whirled her round and round the little tree, fearing all the while that perhaps grown-ups were as fond of pretending as children were.

The scraping and stamping of feet on the doorstep cut short their giddy whirl.

"Papa has come," said her mother, laughing. "Stop now."

Tanya retired into a corner.

"Kolya has come," she said, paling.

But they had not come. The arrivals were three of Tanya's Pioneer girl friends.

Tanya emerged from her corner and shook hands with each one.

"May we dance?" asked the girls excitedly, although their eyes were still dimmed from the frost.

"Of course, today we can do anything we like!" said Tanya, "I'll put on the gramophone right away."

Loud music filled the whole house like sunshine, flooded it with sound to the very roof.

Tanya's father arrived with Nadezhda Petrovna. He embraced Tanya several times and wished her a happy New Year.

Nadezhda Petrovna gave her a present, a little fur coat and snow shoes embroidered with beads.

But Kolya hadn't come.

"Where's Kolya?" Tanya's mother asked.

"He is such an obstinate fellow," his father replied. "He wouldn't come with us for anything. He said he had his own particular gift for Tanya and he would bring it himself."

Then came Filka with his father, his mother, and three little brothers who had come to town on a visit. They were all brown-skinned like Filka and they stood in a row in front of Tanya and bowed low to her, as their hostess. Then, simultaneously, they all took neatly-folded handkerchiefs out of their pockets and wiped their noses. Their father, the hunter, was obviously very proud of their deportment; their mother looked calmly on, smoking a pipe studded with brass nails. And the nails shone in the candle-light.

The children were lifted up and Tanya kissed them all indiscriminately. She glanced over at her mother who was standing arm-in-arm with Nadezhda Petrovna. They stood like that all the evening, although Tanya tried to separate them—once by asking her mother to hold the new coat, then to help her on with the snowshoes. But each time her mother patted Tanya's shoulder smilingly and returned to Nadezhda Petrovna's side, and went on chatting pleasantly with her.

The children asked for more dance music. And Tanya went over to the gramophone, glad of the chance to turn her back on everyone at least for a second.

She turned the handle earnestly and the black shining disc spun before her eyes, and the needle, like a hardworking horse, ploughed the tiny furrows diligently. It sang and played on and on as

though a chorus of brass trumpets and flutes like bright spirits were loosed by its sharp point.

But Kolya had not come.

"Where can he be?" Tanya thought in distress.

Behind her back the children danced merrily, rocking the little fir tree and the large paper lampshade under the ceiling. Her father was dancing with them. He was very gay this evening and danced so well that the children were delighted.

"Look, Tanya," her mother kept saying to her, "look at your father dancing!"

"Yes," replied Tanya, "I see. He dances very well."

She looked at her father but her thoughts and her gaze wandered. And she realized that neither her father nor his dancing nor the merriment held her attention. And was it so long ago that the very thought of her father had brought so many bitter and sweet emotions crowding in her heart? What was the matter with her? Why could she think of nothing but Kolya?

"Where is he now? Zhenya is having a fir tree party tonight."

But at this point Filka and his little brothers started to gyrate slowly in an ever-widening circle. They stepped lightly, barely raising their feet from the floor and now one, now the other, beckoned to Tanya. They danced the dance of happy Evenks on the sandy banks of the Tugur at the hour when the moon rises over the forest.

Tanya entered their circle. While dancing, she kept her eyes on the door.

"Well done!" cried her father, delighted. "We shall all have a fine time tonight. Tanya, ask Mamma for some wine. I have still another gift for you, children."

And the mother said:

"You must be crazy. Children mustn't have wine."

"I know only one thing for certain," replied father, "that is—that children oughtn't to eat poison berries. But a tiny drop of wine is permissible."

"Just a tiny drop," the children repeated.

So the old nurse brought in a bottle of sweet wine on a very large tray. And behind the nurse came a very young Red Army man named Frolov, carrying a pail. He wore a chauffeur's fur coat and smiled a knowing smile at them all.

"Frolov, old man," said the father, "show the kids what we have brought them."

The children peeped into the pail themselves but all they saw was snow.

"Why," they said, "there's nothing there but snow."

"Just wait, kids, just wait till you see," said Frolov.

And digging his hand into the pail he drew a large orange from beneath the snow, then another two, then some more. The children squealed with joy at the sight of the fruit. They took them in their hands and put them back at once because the oranges were hard and icy-cold and as painful to hold as a piece of iron that has been left out in the frost.

"Wait a while, children," said Tanya's father, laughing. "They have to get the frost out of them first. And then I warrant you'll like them well enough."

He dropped an orange into a basin of cold water and in an instant ice formed a thin coating on the rind. And the orange glittered like the bright glass ball that hung from the little fir tree.

The man struck the rind with his knife and it fell off and a round fresh fruit emerged from the fragments of ice that melted rapidly on his palm. There was something strange and wonderful about the

color and aroma of an orange up here in the Far North. Filka's little brother was afraid to eat it.

Filka gave his to his father.

"Eat it yourself," said the hunter, glancing at the strange fruit without a flicker of surprise. "It is a gift from your friends and cannot harm you. But if it were not so large I should have thought it a berry fallen from the rowan-tree and I would have cleaned my new pipe with it, for the mist in the forest dims the brass so quickly. Our rowan berries," he added with dignity, "are large too sometimes before the frost."

And he waved away the orange, for he was growing old and he was reluctant to acknowledge the superiority of anything that did not grow in his native forests.

So Filka hid his orange in his blouse, planning to share it later with Tanya. He could eat nothing alone—neither the sweet roots he found in the forest, nor the spring lime sap, nor honey, nor the sour juice of the ants.

But Tanya was no longer among her guests. Where had she gone? What was the matter with her? She had seemed sad again this evening.

Filka looked into the next room. It was dark there and the guests' coats were heaped on the beds. But she wasn't there either. He went to the kitchen and caught sight of Tanya just as she was stealing out of the back door. She had her coat on and was bending down to tighten the straps of her new snow-shoes. Filka said nothing; he only moved to one side and hid her from the eyes of the guests.

Tanya went out onto the steps. The frosty air rose in columns and at a great height turned into transparent clouds, trailing over the bright heavens. And through them, as through glass dimmed by the breath, a small cold moon was visible.

Tanya trod the snow carefully, trying not to make a crunching noise. A light, sparkling haze settled over her face and shoulders. She passed her hand over her uncovered head and went out through the gate. Then she ran across the street and stopped in front of Zhenya's house. Snowdrifts were piled high on every side.

Tanya sat down in the snow for a while before she could bring herself to look through the windows. Then she climbed onto a high, firm snowdrift. The window was on a level with her eyes. And through the pane she saw an opaque white brilliance like the dimmed moon. It came from the candles on the fir-tree. Children were moving about the tree. Their shadows swam before Tanya's fixed gaze and in each of them she fancied she recognized Kolya.

Her head burned in the frosty air.

And she stood there watching. The shadows flitted by like phantoms in the twilight kingdom of the sea. And only one shadow, deeper and darker than the others, stood still—the shadow of an enormous fish with a drooping tail. But presently it, too, began to swim. It glided now upward, now downward, darting suddenly sideways across the glass. And even the bubbles it blew from its mouth were clearly visible.

"What can it be?" Tanya thought in a panic. "Oh, goodness, it is Zhenya's aquarium on the windowsill!"

But all at once dark hands stretched out toward the window and the fish vanished. And with it vanished the whole magic vision that had entranced Tanya. Someone's back now blocked the window.

A door slammed close by. Tanya

crouched down quickly. She slid down the snowdrift and dashed away, leaping snow and ice and frozen planks. She ran on and on, heedless of where she was going until her agitation had subsided. But what an intense sadness still weighed upon her!

Tanya could not bring herself to enter her own house. She lingered in the courtyard near the fence beside the thick trunk of the birch that hid her from view.

"What is the matter with me?" she said, addressing no one in particular. "What is it! What is happening to me, tell me!"

The birch was silent and only the fir rustled a little, as it reluctantly admitted the frosty air through its needles.

Filka came out hatless onto the doorstep and called to Tanya but she did not reply. He even went to the gate, looked out, and then turned back. Not until he had disappeared did Tanya go indoors. She went to the room where the children were still dancing around her father and there on a chair by the tree stood Kolya, changing the burnt-out candles. At the sight of him Tanya caught her breath, and swayed a little. Her hair was moist from hoarfrost, her clothes were covered with snow.

"Tanya, where have you been?" asked her father in alarm.

"I went outside for a breath of air. I felt giddy."

"Go and lie down on my bed," her mother said.

Kolya jumped down from the chair and went up close to Tanya.

"Wait," he said, "I want to show you my gift. I had to go a long way to get it from a Chinese I know."

First he brought out a heap of thin worms redder than the berries of the wild rose. She put them on the wooden bench near the stove. Then he showed her a little aquarium with a goldfish swimming in it. It was a large fish with a drooping tail that resembled a flowing robe with a train. It struck against the side of the bowl. There was barely enough room for it within the translucent glass walls. Wisps of green weed floated on the top of the water.

"You had to go to a Chinese for it?" said Tanya. "It is a pity you went to all that trouble. I don't keep fish in a glass bowl on the windowsill. I shall have to fry it."

Kolya's brows drew together, his eyes grew dark and impenetrable. He did not seem to hear Tanya's words. Only his hands seemed to weaken and the bowl trembled; the fish, swishing its tail, swam to the top and a few drops of water splashed over onto the floor.

Kolya went over to the old nurse, who had been standing all evening in the doorway.

"Nurse," he said, "fry this fish with potatoes for Tanya."

"Yes," Tanya said. "Do please. It's a very tasty kind of fish—the crucian family."

And going up to her father, she took his hand.

"Papa, let's dance together. You dance so well!"

And the feet that had done so much running about over snowdrifts that day, started to move again, this time over the smooth floor. She had to stand on tiptoe to reach her father's shoulder. And when her head, bent back slightly, began to ache a little from the strain she let her forehead rest against her father's sleeve. And he rocked her in his arms a little as they danced. She swayed like the grasses in a tranquil stream. And he was happy and smiling. At last he was recompensed for his efforts, which had seemed to him unnecessary; he was amply re-

warded for his handsome gifts, his jolly dancing, his iced oranges and the few drops of wine he had permitted the children to drink.

And Tanya's mother was happy, too, as she walked among her guests. Although every movement she made was restrained, her face was alive and even her voice sounded different.

Tanya danced with her mother and with Nadezhda Petrovna and, weary at last, she retired into a corner behind her decorated fir tree.

Filka stood alone beside it, at the window. She had quite forgotten him and had not said a word to him all evening. Filka called her several times before she raised her absent gaze to his face.

"Someone is going skating with Kolya tomorrow," said Filka.

"You?" asked Tanya.

Filka shook his head.

"Who then?"

"Zhenya."

"Oh—I see."

Tanya clutched at the tree. It swayed in her grasp and a silver ball fell to the floor, breaking into myriad fragments. Tanya crushed the pieces with her foot.

"And what else did Kolya ask you to tell me?"

But Filka was feeling sorry for her already.

His face, nut-brown like the faces of his father and brothers, shone in the candlelight.

"I know how to swallow a candle," he said.

Tanya looked at him without speaking. And Filka took a burning candle from the tree, blew it out and began to chew it.

Tanya came to herself instantly.

"What are you doing, Filka?" she cried. "Suppose it's bad for you?"

"Nonsense, Tanya, of course it isn't poisonous," said Filka. "It isn't very tasty, but it's funny. Don't you think so?"

Tanya could not help laughing.

And tears started to Filka's eyes. They shone from under his heavy lids like bright little lamps. And he went on stolidly chewing.

Why did he seem to be crying?

Tanya glanced around but could find no explanation for Filka's tears.

She took the candle away from him by force.

"You'll be sick, Filka," she said. "Listen, I want to go with you tomorrow morning to the school concert. But why," she added, "do you set such a bad example to the little ones? Just look."

Filka's little brother was standing beside him, chewing a candle. But the performance evidently caused him no bitterness. The face with the broad cheekbones expressed good-humored cunning and intense satisfaction with himself.

He clutched an orange tightly in his fist.

XV

The guests left after midnight and Tanya wished everyone a happy New Year—her special chums and others she was not so fond of, and the hunter and Filka, and her father, and mother and Nadezhda Petrovna.

And to Kolya she said:

"A happy New Year, Kolya, let's be friends and forget about that silly old fish."

In the middle of the night Tanya awoke with a start. It must have been a young mosquito hatched out of the grubs Kolya had brought her, or perhaps there had been an old mosquito among the worms that had been left warming by the stove. At any rate it awoke suddenly and began to hum. And the sound of its humming here in the middle of a winter's night,

when it had no business to be alive at all, was rather frightening!

Tanya sat up in bed and gazed into the darkness listening to its whine, and the faint whirr of its wings and her heart beat as loudly as the night watchman's clapper.

Was this pitiful sound enough to frighten her?

"I must kill it," Tanya thought.

But the mosquito hummed only a little while longer and then ceased. It had died.

Tanya went to sleep again and awoke the next morning feeling happy.

Her mother had gone to the hospital—she was on duty this morning—but even that did not distress Tanya. She had a sense of freedom, her body felt no weight at all.

"Why am I so happy?" she wondered. "Is it because of our holidays, or is it perhaps the love that that shameless Zhenya—with her fat cheeks—talks about? Well, let it be! I don't care! What if I am? I shall dance with him at the party this evening. And I shall go to the skating rink. I won't get in their way one bit. I shall stand in a corner behind a snowdrift and watch them skating. And perhaps the strap of his skates will come unfastened. And then I shall fasten it for him. Yes, I shall do that for certain."

Thus she mused as she washed herself and ate her breakfast. And her eyes shone and every movement she made, every step she took, seemed a novel and thrilling experience to her.

She sharpened her skates, tied the straps on firmly and threw a lump of sugar to her old dog. He came up slowly, sniffing eagerly for the sugar, nosing about blindly, but so weak was his scent now that he couldn't find it.

Still, this time poor old Tiger did accompany his mistress on her walk. But, as he reflected later in his wise old way, the whole thing was utterly senseless. They stood for an hour behind a snowdrift on the skating rink. There was no one in sight. The place was deserted. And what he observed down below on the river struck him as sinister. From beyond the distant wooded cape the wind crept slowly up, touching the edge of the rocks and whisking the snow off the boulder with an angry hiss.

He and Tanya had stood there for a long while before turning back. But scarcely had they begun to climb the path that ran behind the fishers' huts than they caught sight of Kolya. He was with Zhenya, supporting her as she slid along the slides the fishermen's children had made. And both carried skates.

Tanya turned quickly aside into an alley and hid behind a house, thrusting her skates into a mound of snow. Tiger sat down alongside, looking up at her questioningly. He could not for the life of him understand her today.

Now Kolya and Zhenya were passing by them, unaware of their presence. Tanya stood without moving and Tiger whined softly because his paws were beginning to shake with the cold. He thought of the fragrant smell of the bones of game, that Kolya so frequently brought him and his conscience worried him. With a joyful yelp he sprang out from behind the house and ran after Kolya, who turned round in surprise.

"Tiger, what are you doing here?" he asked. "Where's Tanya?"

Tanya came out of the alley and stood before him; there was no sense in hiding now. A hot flush spread over her face turning it a deeper red than even the cold wind that had been blowing since morning from the east could have done.

"Tiger, you bad dog!" she cried. "Come here at once!"

Kolya nodded a greeting to Tanya and came toward her, swinging his skates.

"Have you been to the skating rink already?" he asked. "I thought you and Filka had gone to the school concert?"

Tanya stood where she was with her face turned aside and her words would not come out right although she spoke in a haughty tone.

"I haven't been to the skating rink at all. Can't you see I haven't got my skates with me? Filka told you the truth. We are going to the school concert together."

Kolya looked down at Tanya's hands. No, she wasn't carrying any skates, either in her hands or over her shoulder.

"So it's true? Splendid," he said. "In that case, come here, Tiger!"

"Tiger," cried Tanya warningly, "stay where you are."

And the old dog obeyed her although he could not forget the way those lovely bones used to smell. He sat still beside Tanya, wondering, perhaps, what he ought to do in such a delicate situation as this; then suddenly, as if he had only just remembered some important business of his own, he dashed off around the corner, leaving the children alone.

Tanya followed him hastily.

She walked along, forcing herself not to look back.

"No, I shall never hide from Kolya again," she thought. "I shall never fasten the straps on his skates; I shouldn't either."

And no matter how short a time Tanya had lived in the world and no matter how long she still had to live, she resolved never to think of Kolya again for the rest of her life, to dismiss all thought of him from her mind. Surely there must be greater joys in the world than this, joys that gave one less trouble.

She had known them only a short while ago, when fishing in the river or listening to the ringing notes of the bugle at Pioneer drill as she lined up with her comrades. Even now Filka was waiting for her to go to the concert at school and all her old friends were gathering by the open gates. After all, she could simply look around her without thinking about anything; yes, she could simply look closer and take in everything in her native town. It was a source of pleasure to her, too. It was small, but, like herself, it was on friendly terms with the sky, with the forests dark with firs, over which the river eagles hover in the springtime. The town was beautiful now in winter. It wasn't all built of wood, either. Its wharf was stone and so was her school, and the new building where they smelted gold. And what a lot of new roads there were running toward it out of the forest and back again into its very depths where night and day you could hear the breathing of tall chimneys, and see the smoke rising over the tops of the cedars. And how many cars glided through the town with chains to prevent them from skidding on the slippery snow.

And there was the old tinker strolling through the town crying out at the crossroads: "Tinning and soldering!" In springtime he carried his tackle on his shoulder, but in winter he dragged it behind him over the snow and it followed him like a little dog on a lead. There was everything anyone could want; surely that wasn't so bad!

She watched the old tinker on his noisy way, and then stepped out at a brisker pace, breaking into a run as she drew nearer the school gate.

The children were standing about in groups outside the school. But,

funnily enough, they seemed to be leaving the building instead of entering. They ran to meet Tanya, shouting something, but for some time she could not make out what they were trying to say.

"A snowstorm!" they yelled. "There's going to be a snowstorm! There won't be any performance!"

Bundled up in fur coats, the mothers took the little ones by the hand and took them home. Other children were being taken home by their fathers.

Alexandra Ivanovna came out of the gates with the little girl whose nimble feet had crossed Tanya's path so often. The teacher's other hand was held fast by a small boy who seemed extremely reluctant to leave.

Then Tanya looked up at the sky and saw that it was divided sharply into two different colors—black and dark blue. Toward the east the black storm clouds rose in a dark wall. And the flag on the watch-tower blew straight out from the flagpole. A blizzard was advancing on the town, advancing steadily, but as yet at a great height; it would not descend for some time.

Tanya looked at the air through her fingers; it was already dark, and growing rapidly thicker.

"A storm," she thought in alarm, "and they are down at the river."

"A storm!" shouted Alexandra Ivanovna. "Hurry home, Tanya. And warn everyone you meet."

But Tanya did not turn back. She ran up to her teacher.

"I am not afraid," she said. "Let me help you. I'll take the little girl home if you wish."

"She lives a long way off by the barges on the river."

"I know, that's all right."

"Very well, you take her home and I will take care of the boy. Only make haste and get home as fast as you can," the teacher said anxiously.

"I'll do everything all right," Tanya replied quickly. "Don't worry, Alexandra Ivanovna."

She took the little girl's hand and together they ran down the long street. Although it was only midday the housewives were already closing the shutters and lighting the lamps.

They ran fast without stopping, except to fight the wind on the crossroads.

From the hill overlooking the river Tanya saw the barges covered with snow to their very mastheads. And over to the right was the skating-rink. The smooth broad stretch of ice was free from snow. The garlands of fir branches strung from stakes on the edge of the rink were tossed like the tackle on a schooner caught in a squall. And far beyond the rink, on the summits of the open hills along the river, little swirls of snow rose like flowers quivering on slender stems. The rink was deserted save for two tiny figures skating hand-in-hand by the edge of the ice.

Tanya ran down the pathway and along the bank, glancing now at the rink and now at the little girl who was breathless with running.

She stopped for a moment.

"They're from our school," said the little girl. "Why don't you shout to them?"

Instead of replying Tanya placed the girl's hand against her own heart.

"Hear how fast it is beating!"

"My ears are frozen," said the other. "So I can't hear anything. Look, the storm is coming up and they're skating down there. Shout to them, why don't you?"

Still Tanya did not answer. She picked up the child in her arms and carried her into the house that stood on the bank.

A moment later Tanya dashed out of the house, this time alone.

She jumped down onto the ice and proceeded along the pathway among the barges, her feet sinking in the snow. She wouldn't hurry, she decided. She would just come up to the rink and say to them roughly: "You'd better come to your senses and go home. Only you needn't think I came specially to tell you. I merely happened to pass by on the way from the little girl's house. It's lucky for you that I did because you seem to be too absorbed to think of anything like a storm. And even if I hadn't been taking the girl home I would have come here because I like walking by the river before a storm. You don't have to believe me if you don't want to. But you can see I didn't hurry here, and I'm going away this very minute without hurrying one bit."

Thinking thus, Tanya walked faster and faster without noticing it, her feet bore her along in spite of herself. She hurried past the frozen barges and the dark air whistled by her ears. The path she had taken proved to be the shortest cut and led her to the rink in no time. But it was deserted. She looked down the river and at the banks, where, in the highest spots, the snow was rising like smoke-wreaths. And suddenly she saw Kolya close at hand, sitting on the snow beside the fir-garlands that had been blown down by the wind. Beside him sat Zhenya. The storm clouds were creeping closer to the sun.

Tanya burst through the ropes of fir branches.

"Are you blind or what?" she said to Zhenya. "A blizzard is coming up. Alexandra Ivanovna has ordered everyone to go home."

But before the words were out of her mouth she had seen that Zhenya was thoroughly frightened already. Although her cheeks were still red, she was trembling with fear.

"What has happened?" Tanya asked in alarm.

"It's all Kolya's fault," Zhenya said through chattering teeth. "He wanted to go skating with me. But I'm scared stiff, there's such a wind here."

"Why tell fibs," said Kolya. "Wasn't it you who wanted to go skating this morning?"

"And wasn't it you who sent Filka to tell Tanya we were coming here this morning?" Zhenya retorted angrily.

But Tanya was not listening. She was bending anxiously over Kolya. His face was pale and he was holding his foot; he couldn't get up out of the snowdrift.

"Go home, you silly," he said to Zhenya. "Go home—the two of you. I'll stay here by myself."

Zhenya could not stop trembling.

"I'm going!" she said.

Tanya took her by the shoulders and turned her gently round to face the town.

"Go," she said, "only drop into Filka's place on the way and tell him we're here. My mother is out."

"No, no. I'm going straight home. I'm frightened, the storm will break soon."

Zhenya started off at a run up the hill, shielding her face with her coat sleeve from the wind.

And Tanya dropped down beside Kolya and began to unfasten the straps of his skates.

"Have you hurt yourself?" she asked. "Is it painful?"

He said nothing.

The darkness lowered all around them, enveloping the river, the ice and the sky.

Her fingers were frozen. Now and then she pressed them hard between her knees to warm them. Kolya tried not to groan. She held out her hand to him. He struggled up, only to drop down again, helpless, on the snow.

"Have you broken your leg?" Tanya asked in fear.

"No, I've only a strained muscle. That silly Zhenya can't skate for nuts."

And he chuckled, although he had no business to be laughing at a time like this.

Perhaps he was laughing at her and her fears for his life? Perhaps he was making fun of her and only pretending that his foot hurt?

"Look," he said, "here comes Tiger with your skates in his teeth. I knew you had hidden them."

She glanced up at the road.

Sure enough, there was Tiger trotting over the snow dragging her skates by the straps. He laid them at her feet and sat down well pleased with himself, awaiting some sign of gratitude from her. She stroked his cold fur with her numbed fingers. But what use were her skates now, and where had he found them? He must have dug them out of the snow behind the house. He must have dragged them along the street trundling them under everyone's feet and scared of the passers-by. And the wind must have blown him down in the snow. No doubt it had been hard work hauling those skates. And all for nothing. She had no use for them now.

"What shall I do," she said. "Mother isn't home. There's no one but Tiger. But if you can't walk I could carry you to the fishers' huts. Because we can't stay here. You don't know what snowstorms are like hereabouts."

"I'm not afraid of your snowstorms," replied Kolya stubbornly. "And if you think I didn't go in after that unfortunate little kitten because I was scared of your deep river, you're mistaken. But you can think what you please. And you can go home if you are scared."

"No," said Tanya. "It's not the storm I'm afraid of. I am afraid for you. I know it's dangerous and I'm going to stay here with you."

She sat down on the snow beside Kolya. She looked at him with a tenderness she no longer cared to hide. And there was alarm in her eyes.

He lowered his head.

"I ought to be home," he said, "I promised father."

"What shall I do?" Tanya repeated.

She turned away from Kolya and looked thoughtfully at Tiger, who was shivering miserably on the whirling snow. Then she jumped to her feet in relief as an idea struck her.

The sky was creeping down from the mountains and spreading like a cloud of black smoke over the gorges. And the inky distance came closer, it was right behind the rocks now. But the wildest wind had not emerged yet from behind the sandy headland where the boulders lay scattered. And the snow had not yet begun to fall. The storm was slow in coming.

"We still have time," said Tanya. "Filka has some teamdogs, I know how to drive a sled quite well. I'll get them and bring them down here. We may just make it. Wait here for me and I'll drive you home to father. Only don't be afraid. Tiger will stay with you. He won't go away."

Tanya made Tiger sit down on the snowdrift and allowed him to lick her hand. He stayed where he was, glancing with fear toward the north where the storm was already tossing the trees on the hills and setting the snow whirling.

Tanya ran swiftly up the bank.

Breasting the wind, with lowered head, she ran down the street between the high walls of snow. All the gates were shut fast, except Filka's; his was wide open. He had just arrived home with

his father on the dog sled. He was standing on the doorstep cleaning the snow off his skis, and looked up in surprise to see Tanya beside him all out of breath. The dogs were lying by the gate; they had not yet been taken out of harness. And the long ash rod—the *kayur*—was thrust in the snow beside them.

Tanya caught it up and jumped into the sled.

"What are you doing, Tanya!" cried Filka in dismay. "Take care, they're fierce."

"Never mind," said Tanya, "don't say anything, Filka dear, I have to take Kolya to his father's house as quick as I can. He has sprained his ankle on the skating rink. I'll bring your sled back right away. It's not far if we go by the river."

She flourished the *kayur*, shouting to the dogs in the Gilyak tongue, and they raced out of the gateway.

Before Filka had time to spring down the steps and put on his skis the sled was far away. But he ran after Tanya shouting at the top of his voice:

"The storm! The storm! Where are you going? Wait for me!"

She sat astride the sled like a real hunter. She drove it well, holding the *kayur* in readiness. And strange to say, the dogs obeyed her, though her voice was unfamiliar.

Filka came to a standstill. The wind struck him in the shoulders and forced him down on his skis but he did not turn back.

He crouched down on his skis for a while, thinking of what he had just seen, of the wind, of Tanya and of himself. And deciding that everything that is good should take the right direction, he turned sharply away from home, and took the road that led through the woods to the fortress, and ran along it in the teeth of the storm.

Meanwhile his dogs had brought Tanya safely to the ice. She pulled up the sled beside Kolya, thrusting the *kayur* between the runners. And the dogs lay down at once without snapping or growling at one another.

Kolya got to his feet with difficulty, and staggered with pain. But still he managed to smile. His frozen face lighted up with pleasure at the sight of the dog-sled, the first he had ever seen, and in anticipation of his first ride.

"You know this isn't a bad idea at all," he said, looking at the light sled, with its whalebone framework, and at the dock-tailed dogs nosing the snow around them. "These dogs are not half as ferocious or as powerful looking as Filka makes out. They are not much bigger than our Pomeranians."

But Tanya, who could gauge their ferocity, their unbridled nature and their constant yearning for freedom, never left the sled for a moment, except to take Kolya's arm and help him carefully onto the sled. Then she lifted Tiger, who was trembling with fear, and, holding him close against her chest she jumped onto the sled and drove off. How swift and sure were her movements, how watchful the look she cast at the snow that was now beginning to hiss and swirl on the roadway, and how timid the glance she turned on Kolya, who was seated behind her.

"Does it hurt very much?" she asked anxiously. "Never mind, we'll soon be home. If only we can get there before the blizzard starts."

He looked at her in amazement. There was something in her eyes, that looked anxiously out at him from under their frosted lashes, something about her altogether that struck him as being full of a new meaning he could not fathom. It was as though these wild dogs

harnessed to the light sled were speeding them through the sharp, driving snow that stung their faces, away to some strange land of which he had never heard.

And he held onto her coat to keep himself from falling.

But the blizzard had taken possession of the road. It advanced in a great wall, swallowing up the light like a cloudburst, and roaring like thunder amid the rocks.

Deafened and half-stunned by the wind, Tanya saw through the white blinding wall of snow, a horse came galloping down the road, fleeing, for dear life, tearing itself away from the oncoming storm. Tanya could not see whom the horse was bearing away from the blizzard. She merely felt the dogs hurl themselves forward to meet it and she shrieked at them wildly. Kolya did not understand the meaning of that shriek; but she knew why she had shrieked so wildly: the dogs had ceased to obey her!

Tanya brandished her *kayur* like a heavy spear and plunged it with all her strength into the snow. It sank deep and snapped. Then Tanya turned her head and in that instant Kolya caught the look of horror on her face.

"Hold tight to the sled!" she cried to him.

She lifted Tiger high above her head and threw him out into the road. He fell yelping onto the snow. Then, as if realizing what he had to do, he scrambled to his feet and rushed alongside the team barking furiously. He was ahead of them now, dashing on to his doom. The dogs noticed him. He leapt aside and the team dashed after him.

The horse galloped safely past.

"My poor dear Tiger," thought Tanya.

He bounded over the snow, he sank deep, so deep that he almost smothered in it. At that moment he must have cursed the people who bred dogs like him, with unwieldy bodies and short legs, and long weak necks. But he loved this little girl; they had played together when he was a puppy, they had grown up together, but he alone was growing old. Was it fair?

He sat down on the snow to wait for death.

Hearing his long howl and hoarse sobbing breath, and the gnashing of the dogs' fangs above the roar of the wind, Tanya crouched low on the sled.

No longer held back by the brake, the sled collided with the disordered team, reared and turned over on its side.

Tanya caught at a runner. A flash like lightning, blinded her for a second. The string of the sled, striking against a sharp block of ice, snapped with a hiss. And the team, freed at last from harness, tore away into the raging blizzard.

No one moved: neither Tanya, who lay by the side of the sled, nor Kolya who had fallen prone, nor poor dead Tiger with his torn and bleeding throat, gazing with sightless eyes toward the stormy sky—all was still. Only the snow and the air moved hither and thither over the river.

Tanya was the first to rise to her feet. She bent down and righted the sled, then bent down and helped Kolya to rise. Her fall had not dazed her. Her movements were as swift, and strong and nimble, as before. She brushed the snow from her face as calmly as though no calamity had occurred.

Kolya could not stand on his feet.

"We're done for, Tanya! What have I done!" he exclaimed in horror. Tears started to his eyes, but they froze there on his lashes.

And he began to stagger again, and was slipping to the ground

when Tanya caught hold of him and tried to hold him up.

"Kolya," she cried, "Kolya, listen, we will never be done for. Only we mustn't stand still or we'll be buried under the snow. Can you hear me, Kolya, dear Kolya, we've got to move on!"

She helped him to his feet and supported him in her arms, straining every muscle. And they stood there, as though locked in an embrace. And the blizzard folded them for a moment in its snowy shroud and then deafened them with its raucous voice.

Tanya drew the sled towards her with her foot.

"No, no," cried Kolya. "I won't have that! I'm not going to let you drag me home on it."

He tried to free himself from her but Tanya threw her arms around his neck. Their cold faces touched. She pleaded with him, saying the same thing over and over again although it was hard to utter a word for every sound died on her lips in this shrieking wind.

"We will be all right," she said. "We haven't far to go . . . quick! We mustn't delay."

He slumped down on the sled. She brushed the snow from his face with her scarf, examined his hands—they were still dry—and bound his gloves securely round the wrists.

Catching hold of the broken end of the cord, Tanya started to drag the sled after her. Tall waves of snow swept toward her, blocking her path. She climbed to their crests and down again, plodding on and on, shouldering her way through the dense, swift-moving air that clung desperately to her clothing at every step like prickly weeds. The air was dark and filled with swirling snow that obscured everything.

Now and again Tanya halted and went over to the sled to shake Kolya and force him to walk a few steps, ignoring his sufferings and complaints. Her breath came in gasps. Her face was wet and her clothing stiff with ice.

She struggled on thus for a long while without knowing whither she was going, seeing neither town, river-bank nor sky—for everything had vanished behind this white mist. But she plodded on, head bent, groping her way with her feet, and the sweat poured down her back as if it were a scorching summer's day.

Suddenly she heard a cannon. She took off her fur cap and stopped to listen, then she ran to Kolya and made him get off the sled and walk a little again.

She shouted to him, forcing the sounds to issue from her throat. Yet her shout sounded no louder than the rustle of dry snowflakes.

He nodded feebly. A numbness was creeping over him. And Tanya did not put him back on the sled any more. With her arm around his waist and his arm over her shoulder she pushed forward, forcing him to move his feet. And the sled was abandoned.

They turned to the left; the cannon had boomed again from that direction. It had sounded much louder and reverberated along the river.

Tanya breasted the wind bravely, thankful for the powerful lungs that helped her to draw breath somehow in this fearful storm, grateful for the strong legs that carried her on, and for the strong arms that held her friend fast.

But now and again fear would grip her for an instant. And then it seemed to her that she was all alone in this world, alone in the midst of the blizzard.

But she was wrong, for in a close chain that stretched far down the river the border-guards were coming towards her on their skis,

battling the snowstorm. They all held to a long rope, and linked thus, they feared nothing in the world. The same gloom, the same ice blocks, the same high snowdrifts, rolling this way and that, rose before them as before Tanya. But the guards mounted and descended them easily, without wasting their breath. And when they encountered an unusually powerful gust of wind they bent low, as though striving to slip under it.

In this way they gradually reached the spot where Tanya was. But even a couple of paces away she was invisible to them. And the little girl whose face was covered with frozen sweat and who held fast to her frail comrade felt as much alone in the snowstorm as she had before. She still pressed forward, but her strength was gone. She staggered at every gust of wind, lost her balance, got up again, groping blindly with one hand. And all at once she felt a rope under her elbow. She clutched at it convulsively. Perhaps it was the rope from the barge that stood snowbound in the ice nearby. Yet, feeling her way along the rope she called out:

"Is there anyone there? Help! Help!"

And suddenly her hand touched her father's coat.

Here in the darkness, without any visible sign, without the help of the eyes that were blinded by snow, without the help of the fingers that were numb with cold, but with the warm heart that had sought her father so long, she now felt his nearness, knew that he was here in the blackness of the cold, death-dealing wilderness.

"Papa! Papa!" she cried.

"Here I am," he replied.

And tears streamed down her face, disfigured with suffering and exhaustion.

"He is alive," she said, and pushed Kolya towards her father; she herself sank down, shaking with sobs, her forehead against his knee.

He squatted down in the snow, and, tearing off his coat, covered the shivering children with it.

What was the matter with him? He was weeping, too, his face was wet with tears and distorted with suffering like Tanya's. But it might have been only the snow that had melted from the breath issuing from under his warm helmet.

"Filka, it was Filka who ran to tell us," said the father.

"Filka, Filka," Tanya repeated aloud, although Filka was nowhere about.

For a minute or two they stood huddled together and the snow crept higher and higher around them.

Then her father tugged hard at the rope. Red Army men appeared on the right and on the left, holding onto the rope. Like white snow-mounds they emerged out of the blizzard and came to a halt beside the children.

The last to appear was the young Red Army man Frolov. He was enveloped in snow from head to foot. His rifle hung at his shoulder and his face was covered with snow.

"So we found them," he said. "I said we would. It couldn't turn out otherwise. We wouldn't let an enemy slip through our fingers, much less a friend—we would turn the earth upside down to find a friend."

The Red Army men surrounded the children and the colonel and moved in a body back through the storm.

And one more shot boomed forth from the fortress.

(To be concluded)

PETRAS ZVIRKA

The Frontier

This story, which I heard from a frontier guard, altered all my pre-conceived notions of frontiers: of frontiers dividing one State from another, one nation from another, one house from another, one family from another, and one person from another.

. . . One autumn night I was standing at my post (said the frontier guard), on a low hill. A fine, wearisome drizzle had been falling for the past two days. It rarely happened that a runaway or a smuggler fell into our hands at this particular frontier station. Set in the middle of open country, there was not a bush or a tree to afford shelter; the frontier line rån somewhere through the middle of a lake. You could see for miles in every direction. The opposite side of the frontier was guarded by a patrol who very seldom came down to the edge of the lake. There was nothing to do—except, perhaps, turn over in our minds the thoughts that had already been turned over times without number, and wait for the next man to relieve us.

What I used to do to make the time pass was this: a hundred yards or so away from the sentry box there was a thumping great stump of an oak tree. Well, I used to tramp up and down to this stump, trying to cover about a meter of ground at every step, and at this rate I reckoned I was doing fifteen kilometers a day. After every two kilometers I would go back to the sentry box for a smoke and a short rest. That night—the one I'm telling you about—I had just set out for my walk as usual, in spite of that wearisome rain, when I noticed something stirring behind the stump as I was coming up to it.

"Halt! Hands up!" I called out, raising my rifle.

I kept cool, although whoever it was had the advantage of me and could easily have picked me off on the spot.

A tall figure emerged from behind the stump. He attempted neither resistance nor flight: he was carrying something under his arm, but when I called "Hands up!" for the second time he let it fall, and it dropped without a sound to the ground. I ordered the man to step to one side, and picked up the thing he had let fall. It was a small bundle. It occurred to me then that I was dealing with one of those fellows who used to raid a storehouse on the other side and come away with a haul of clothing, or fat or something of the sort. Finally he said:

"Versteh nit."

I ran my pocket flashlight over him, and saw a longish face, overgrown with red beard, and two frightened, glittering eyes. It was an old man. His thin clothing was soaked with rain, his shoes oozed mud. He was trembling from head to foot.

I led the trespasser to one side and searched him. Except for a few pieces of paper, his pockets were empty. There wasn't enough room for two in the sentry-box, and besides, I didn't relish the prospect of such close proximity with a suspicious character, so I left him outside. But I kept my eye on him through the open door, and never laid down my rifle. It was raining harder now, but the exhausted man flopped down on the wet ground outside. He muttered something or other in Jewish, it sounded like an apology. For about three hours he sat like that, his teeth chattering, his head covered with the tails of his sopping coat.

In the morning, when I went off duty, I took my prisoner to the village to see the district chief.

Our chief was a stout, thickset man, who enjoyed the reputation of being a jolly and energetic sort, and a great lover of jokes. He became particularly cheerful and chatty when, as he put it, he had had a little "lubrication," the said lubrication consisting in a tumbler of *vodka* every day. I do not know whether the stoutness or the *vodka* was to blame, but he could not speak above a hoarse whisper.

"Ah, a musician! Gipsy songs!" croaked the chief, when he saw my companion. The chief had evidently just got out of bed, the pillow had left a red mark on his flabby cheek. "Bring him over here. Where was he arrested?"

I told him. My prisoner was a little drier and warmer by this time, and his teeth no longer chattered, but he looked terribly dejected; his grey hair was matted and untidy, he wore a stylish but dirty collar, and some scraps of green material instead of a shirt. He kept stubbornly silent.

The examination began. In such cases our chief never threatened, either with a gun or his fists. On the table beside a skull-shaped ashtray stood a large metal cross. As he gulped down his *vodka*, the chief would ask humorously:

"Your biography, sir? Conductor of an orchestra? What's your musical education?"

The chief put the same questions now to my law-breaker, calling him for some reason a couplet writer.

"Ich schpriche nur Yiddish!"

"I'll give you Yiddish"—this from the chief, as he looked through the papers found in the prisoner's pockets. "Passport, *bitte.*"

The arrested man glanced at me, sighed, and made a gesture of regret.

"On tour, are you? An unknown writer of couplets!" said the chief with a crooked smile.

The prisoner's eyes lit up suddenly and he began to talk at first with some reserve, but gesticulating excitedly as he went on. He was a watchmaker, it appeared. But it had become practically impossible to find work; hunger and terrible persecution had finally made life unbearable. Taking his whole fortune—fifteen gold watches—with him, he had tried to cross the frontier. He had been caught. He had sat in prison for five months, and then been freed, although neither his belongings nor his documents had been returned to him. He had made another attempt, crossing the mountains on foot and living on manure. He had nothing to depend on now but

his hands, which would always bring him a livelihood. He was not trying to take the bread out of anyone's mouth, all he wanted was a corner in a different country.

As the watchmaker spoke, the chief made notes and from time to time tapped a little rubber elephant that had been found in the prisoner's bundle. Then, with a stronger tap at the elephant, the chief asked:

"What's this for?"

Casting a shamefaced glance at the chief, the Jew suddenly pressed his wrinkled, hairy hand to his chest, and explained that this was the only remembrance he had of the little grand-daughter who had remained behind—on the other side of the frontier.

"Man's lot is a hard one. Alas! The honest and the just are born to sorrow!" he added with a sigh. "Are not the sons and daughters of Israel human like the rest?"

"Oh, ho, a philosopher!" interrupted the chief. Then, turning to me, he said: "Take him away and lock him up. Let him go hungry until evening, and then we'll listen to the rest of his repertoire."

When I returned after locking the arrested man in the cell, the chief was pacing up and down the room with a bottle and a glass in his hands.

"Still, there's something funny about it," said the chief with a puzzled shake of his head. "Is he fooling us, or is he just a tramp?" He stood still a moment and looked at me. "Do you know what? This is a good idea: I've got an old broken watch, let him fix it! We'll soon see what kind of a watchmaker he is!"

That same evening I learned that our prisoner, with practically no tools to work with, had repaired the watch. It started to go, and is very likely going to this day. The runaway was fed, and after more questioning, during which he merely repeated what he had said on the first occasion, he was sent back across the frontier that night.

"Let him go back to where he came from," the chief decided. "We've got enough unemployed of our own. If our neighbors don't need him, that's all the more reason why we should be able to get along very well without foreign watchmakers. When all's said and done, the devil only knows who he really is."

What was our surprise when we learned on the following day that some other frontier guards had again detained him on our side. He was brought back to the village, where the chief greeted him with:

"Ah, back again, my old friend! So you like it over here? What am I to do with you now? Send you to prison, perhaps? Our prisons are full up of specialists as it is."

The watchmaker did not reply. His dull, indifferent eyes seemed to see nothing. The full lips protruding from the unkempt beard, trembled. His clothes were wet again, and he huddled down in them, wriggling as though his back itched.

The runaway was held until dusk, marched to a point seven kilometers away and once again sent back across the frontier. The following night he was caught on our side.

A curious kind of contest began. The Polish guards seemed to have conspired to annoy us, but we would not give in. For this man without papers, the frontier had become an enchanted circle through which he could not break.

All that week our frontier guards for scores of kilometers around seemed to be doing nothing else but catching the man nobody want-

ed, and sending him back across the frontier.

"Swine, we'll show them they can't dump their trash on us! Send him back!" shouted the chief in a rage.

The sixth time the watchmaker was returned across the frontier he could hardly walk. His legs seemed so heavy he could hardly drag them after him, his eyes gleamed, like a madman's, with a terrible yearning, and his cheeks, that up to now had been so pale, wore an unhealthy flush. He had aged noticeably, and it seemed to me that his hair had turned greyer. He kept muttering the same thing over and over again.

"I'm an honest man. . . . I wouldn't take the bread out of anyone's mouth."

When he appeared for the seventh time it was decided to send him back across the frontier at the same spot where he had crossed the first time. He was to be taken across by rowboat to the opposite shore of the lake. We waited for darkness to fall. The watchmaker was asleep on the bare ground, not far from the frontier post. The chief himself came to take the prisoner back. He was in excellent spirits; it was clear he had just had his usual "lubrication."

I can see it all as plain as though it had happened only today; I was standing next to the chief. We were a few score meters from the shore; a steep, clayey bank sloped down to the water's edge. The sky was low and cloudy. I roused the watchmaker and the chief ordered him to march ahead of us. A drowsy, helpless figure, he started off, hardly able to drag his legs, as if they sank in the mud at every step. It was evident that the old man had abandoned all hope that this tragic farce would ever come to an end.

The chief and I followed him slowly. I don't remember what it was the chief had said, when I replied:

"There are worse things than that. . . ."

These words, apparently, reminded him of something. He laughed and he began to tell me an anecdote. As he spoke, he took his Browning out of its holster and loaded it. But I was so amused by the joke that I paid no attention to him.

A loud report drowned my laughter. When the echo had died away, somewhere in the darkness, I saw the watchmaker who had been moving along the steep bank, rise to his full height, fling up his arms, and fall. When we reached the lake, we could see the long, black figure still rolling down the steep bank.

LEV NIKULIN

The Last Letter

From the window of my room in Belostok I can see a little square. In the middle of it stands one of our tank-drivers, regulating the traffic with a green-and-yellow flag. I see, too, an old park and a beautiful building that reminds me of a French chateau.

It has a three-storied façade, a high Mansard roof, a left and a right wing where probably lived the servants. The entrance to the inner enclosure is flanked by two statues.

This imposing edifice was formerly the headquarters of the governor of Belostok. Now it houses the Provisional Administration. At one time it stood in the depths of an ancient park, when it was the family mansion of the Counts Pototsky and Branitsky. It was a real palace, a palace with lofty salons that have still preserved their gilding and the traces of the luxury of a bygone day. There were fishponds in the park, and one of these ponds was enclosed, as it were, in the palace itself, in one of the rooms on the ground floor. The floor there was made of glass, so that you could see the water and the fish swimming.

That was in the days when the guests at the palace were the Viceroy of Poland, Constantine Pavlovich, and the tsar Alexander I. From the turret over the great entrance-gates Alexander watched the Russian troops returning from Paris. I read all about this in a book called: *The History of the School for the Daughters of the Nobility of Belostok. Published for the Fiftieth Anniversary of its Foundation.*

The premises of the school were in this very building of which I am speaking, the present headquarters of the Provisional Administration of the district. It was founded for the Polish girls of noble families. Here they were taught fairly simple subjects such as scripture, needlework, dancing, and of course, the French and the Russian languages.

Involuntarily I recalled the Smolny, the historic Smolny Institute, where in 1918 one could still see, above the doors at which the Red Guards were posted, the rather inappropriate legend: "Class-mistresses."

I was sitting by the window, gazing at the beautiful façade of the former local government premises, and regretting that the Poles had painted it a dirty greenish khaki for the purposes of military camouflage, when there came a timid knock at the door. A grey-haired man entered, came up close to me, and said in a voice that trembled a little:

"Don't you recognize me?"

After a moment, I did recognize him. We had been children

together. Half-an-hour later I learned everything that had happened to him in the interval of the thirty odd years we had not seen each other.

I learned that in 1914 he had graduated the college of physics and mathematics at a university, that in 1920 he had entered the Polytechnic at Liege, graduated from it in 1925, only to become, in 1939, an agent for the supplying of rags to textile mills.

"And do you remember Sergei Kalinovsky?" he asked sadly.

Yes, I remembered Sergei Kalinovsky, I remembered him well.

". . . .I want to remind you of an old school-mate of yours. Will call tomorrow at midday. Sergei. . . ."

A note containing these words had been handed to me by the doorman at the hotel *Polonia* in Warsaw, in the autumn of 1935.

Sergei? And in a flash the man who had received the note recalled a small provincial town in Volhynia, the romantic ruins of an ancient castle, the depressing official look of the public school, the desk at the end of the row, where sat the huge over-grown, fair-haired lad, who was a musician and a dreamer, the son of a railwayman working on some little station a long way off.

Thirty years had come and gone and he had reminded his school-mate of his existence. But he had delayed rather too long. The school-mate was to leave Warsaw at eight o'clock next morning for the Soviet frontier—and Moscow.

There was no address on the scrap of paper. There was not even a surname. The Polish police did not approve of Polish subjects associating with holders of Soviet passports. So the meeting between Sergei and his school-mate was destined not to take place.

His comrade left his Moscow address at the hotel and left regretting that he had not been able to see the man with whom for five years he had been sharing a desk at school. How had he turned out—that gay, independent lad?

Sergei himself supplied the answer.

One Moscow morning, a year later, a letter arrived bearing an indecipherable postmark and a Polish stamp. The letter was written in the same fine hand that I knew.

"Everything went dark before my eyes when the doorman handed me your letter and address," he wrote. "I came to you too late, dear comrade. I did not look for any help from you, any financial help, I mean. I only wanted to shake hands with a live person once again, for I am a dying man. I am very nearly dead. This letter is the last I shall ever write in this world. And it makes me happy to think that it is addressed to you, to that wonderful country I shall never, never see.

"Let me tell you of my fate, the fate of a working man.

"Of what interest can it be to anyone, this story of mine? There are thousands here like myself. But in your country people are different, and it is to them I am writing, so that they may realize what joy their great fighters have won for them, so that they may be able to appreciate their own hard-won happiness.

"I, the son of a railway-guard, received a college education. I achieved the very thing the son of a working man dreams of. I wore the gilt epaulettes of the Warsaw Polytechnic, I was a graduate of the Institute. Even the war did not destroy the peaceful tenor of my life. I was employed as an engineer when our works were evacuated to the interior of Russia.

The only thing that worried me was that my wife and children had been left behind in the south-western district, on the other side of the German front. There was never the slightest animosity between the Russian workers and myself, and after the October Revolution I stayed on at the works. There wasn't much to eat, but neither at my home nor in my student days had I been accustomed to luxuries. Work was difficult, but I liked it and I knew how to work. And when, in 1918, I applied to my Bolshevik comrades at the works and said that I wanted to be repatriated and return home to Poland, they were astonished. 'You've never complained,' they said, 'why are you going away just at the most difficult time? What have you got to go back to in Poland—estates or factories or what?'

"I showed them my hands and said: 'These are my only possessions. But I have a wife and children there. Who will earn their bread for them and educate them? Who will protect them?' And I went back to Poland.

"I could tell you a great deal more; how people tormented me because I would not run down the Soviets; how I argued with my wife and read Pushkin and Mickeiwicz to the children, read the poets who are our glory and your glory and the glory of the whole world. But it is not of these things that I wish to write. I did what I had aimed at doing. My three children grew up. One of them is a composer, the other holds a Master's degree. My daughter went to the most famous college in France, the Sorbonne.

"I will not describe the way I lived during the ten years between 1918 and 1928. I gradually learned to keep my thoughts to myself, to hide the fact that I spoke Russian as easily as Polish. (You remember, people spoke Russian, Polish and Ukrainian in our town when we were young.) Life was depressing in our provincial capital; I could not get used to this hypocritical politeness of ours, to the petty, philistine existence of a Polish official.

"A former colleague of mine was working in France. Things had brightened up there in 1927, there was plenty of work and plenty of money to be made. Batches of our laborers were taken there and they felled trees in the Arcachon, and worked in the vineyards. Cheap labor. So I went to France. I would breathe more freely there, I thought. I left my family behind in Warsaw. But I was rather late in going to France. The American crisis started in 1929. A year later things got bad in Paris. I lost my job. In 1933 I came back to Warsaw.

"All my relatives and friends were waiting when I got home. They had arranged a tea-party for me, and spent their last penny on cakes. There were thirteen people collected in the little dining-room: a doctor, a chemist, a musician, two engineers, a seaman, a lawyer, a school-master and—but I have forgotten who the others were. And out of all these, only one, the wife of the landlord of our flat, had a job. She worked in a travel-bureau. Her husband, whose scientific works had been published in five languages, had no job. They were all waiting for me, waiting to see if a man who had just returned from abroad could give them an answer to the question—Why? I told them what I had seen in Paris. I told them of the surgeon who was working as a real estate agent. I told them of the engineer who made a living by distributing cards with the addresses of brothels, along the boulevards. I told

them of the inventor of non-inflammable photographic film who was selling his suit in the 'flea-market.'

"To cut a long story short, three years went by. The day I came to the hotel to see you, I thought I had reached the limit. My wife is dead. I shared a corner of a room with my elder son not far from the Paviak Prison. Sometimes we envy the prisoners. At least they get their regular rations.

"This last year I have been earning my bread by taking photographs of passers-by. I brought a camera back with me from Paris. I used to run after passers-by and take snapshots of them and then thrust cards with the address of the shop into their hands. About one out of every ten came to claim their photographs. The man who ran the laboratory got the lion's share of the profits.

"But I am not so young now and I cannot keep on running after clients. I suffer from sclerosis and miacarditis. Young people get ahead of me with their Leicas. I had one advantage, though—my camera was my own. They had to hire theirs. You can find people of every profession among them—actors, X-ray specialists, book-keepers, and athletes. . . . Last winter I got sick, I was down with a very serious form of grippe. It left bad consequences. I lost all hope of ever getting work.

"Now I shall tell you about my children. The irony of fate! I left Soviet Russia so as to give them a good education. I did what I meant to do. The eldest graduated from the Conservatoire. He is copying music now, in order to make a living. You ought to see him. He is not thirty yet, but he looks like an old man. The younger boy can be seen any day helping one of his countrymen to trade in the central market. And he, who was thought worthy of a Master's degree, is lucky that he has even this to do. As to my daughter, who was at the Sorbonne—it is better to try to forget . . .

"What is the matter? The end has come. No one wants my knowledge and my experience. The winter is endless, I shall never live through it.

"The newspapers print a lot of lies about what is going on where you are. I used to read the papers from Russia when I was in Paris. And your books were to be had there, too. After all, the truth cannot be hidden. Let them show me an engineer of yours who is bloated with hunger. . . . A university graduate who trades in old clothes. A composer who earns a living by copying music. A girl who knows four languages and has attended one of the best colleges and—I cannot bear even to write it.

"My dear friend, comrade of my childhood! I am asking for nothing. I only want people to know how we suffer. Write me only these words: 'I received your letter.' I shall wait eight days for the answer.

"I am writing this last letter of mine in the photo-laboratory. The gas-jets are burning. I am often left here alone. Write to this address. I want to get a letter from the country where people know nothing of sufferings like ours. But hurry, hurry! . . . The letter may not reach me in time.

Sergei.

Warsaw, September, 1936."

I replied to the letter. But my reply was returned to me with "Addressee cannot be found," written across it by the Warsaw General Post Office.

Oh, if my old comrade could only have held out for three years longer!

On China's Literary Front

The most outstanding writers, poets, and playwrights of China belong to the Federation of Chinese Writers, organized in 1938. Numerous literary groups and circles which arose on the crest of the mighty wave of the national liberation movement have also entered the Federation.

Some of these groups were under the influence of Hu Shih, the noted Chinese philosopher and man of letters, who held that the literary renaissance had come to an end with the reformation of the Chinese language. The majority of Chinese writers, however, did not accept his "theory." The following demands were made of literature, as formulated by the League of Left Writers, organized in 1930 by the late Lu Hsun: to fight against the old order and the old ideology, to create works of art that reflect the struggle for a new society, and to create a new type of literary criticism.

The League of Left Writers published three periodicals: *Story*, a monthly magazine, devoted exclusively to the works of Chinese authors; *Bud*, a magazine edited by Lu Hsun, printing critical and publicistic articles as well as the works of foreign writers; and *Literature of the Masses* edited by the well-known writer and statesman Yu Ta-fu, publishing the best works of Chinese literature. Many writers of the old generation joined the League, and numerous brilliant young writers rose to prominence with the help of these magazines. The groups that were under the influence of Hu Shih sustained a heavy blow, but it was only after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria that the death blow fell. Hu Shih's periodical *The New Crescent* entered a decline. Month after month Hu Shih and his followers had been complaining that "China lacked something." They spoke about "the need of a Chinese Bernard Shaw and a Chinese Anatole France; they longed for a government with a prime minister and two houses of parliament or a president with a national assembly. The ideas themselves were very beautiful. But intelligent readers saw that these things could hardly be realized unless China were independent and free of civil wars and the Chinese industrialists allowed to develop their own enterprises in China itself, without foreign competition and destruction . . . ."[1]

Despite the seizure of Manchuria and the new temper of the Chinese public, the groups did not abandon their literary strife. The struggle became more acute and more virulent. To the aid of Hu Shih came a group of chauvinist writers, who aimed to create a chauvinist national literature. This group, which was joined by sever-

[1] Cicio Mar, *Two Decades of China's New Literature*, in *Chinese Writers*. August, 1939.

al writers who made a great deal of noise, but who were not very gifted, contributed nothing of value to literature. All that remained after the group dissolved were a few paper manifestos and some rather poor stories in which the writers attempted to portray heroic individuals whose struggle supposedly took the place of the mass struggle. This group had no influence and made its exit in 1932, after the first invasion of Shanghai by the Japanese troops. A like fate befell the short-lived *Contemporaries*, a magazine whose contributors were largely the Trotskyite hack-writers and literary lackeys of the traitor Wang Ching-wei. They preached escape from reality, calling on writers to deal in their works with neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat, with neither the class struggle nor the Chinese people's struggle for national and social liberation, to write neither for the proletariat nor for the bourgeoisie, but for society as a whole, about harmonious interrelationships among people.

These attempts to create a literature beyond or above classes collapsed under Lu Hsun's trenchant and withering criticism. In general, the invasion of Shanghai by Japanese imperialism and the heroic resistance put up by men of the Nineteenth Army and the entire toiling population of Shanghai forced many Chinese writers to realize the gravity of the problems they faced. The petty bourgeois intellectuals had abandoned the period of wavering and indecision. It became clear to all that the whole nation was undergoing an all-round and unprecedented crisis. Among writers there was a marked change of front.

The struggle of the Chinese peasantry in Manchuria, the fruitless attempts of the Japanese militarists to colonize Manchuria, the bankruptcy of economic and social life in China, which was groaning under the pressure of foreign imperialism, found expression in the best works of the period: *August Village*, by Hsiao Chun, Hsiao Hung's *Life and Death Field*, which portrayed the fight of the Chinese partisans, and the novels of Mao Tun, *Twilight* and *Spring Silkworms*, which reflected the bankruptcy of Chinese agriculture and native capitalism. These books are considered the best of the realistic works, creating, in the words of one Chinese critic, a "school of new realism."

Rapidly developing events—the seizure of North China by Japanese imperialism, and the offensive on the central and southern provinces—made great changes in the political life of the country.

Lu Hsun

The most important political parties, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, discontinued their mutual strife and united in a joint struggle against Japanese imperialism. The call to fight for national independence, for the salvation of the homeland and the nation, became the chief slogan for the whole country. The disputes among the various literary groups and circles came to an end. The writers united for the purpose of creating a "National Defense Literature." Of this period in the growth of Chinese literature, Mao Tun writes in the magazine *Literature*: "Our new literature is national defensive in nature. It is a literature which sings of the struggle of the Chinese people for their freedom, but it is not chauvinistic. True, it has hatred for the enemy who is invading our country, but it is sympathetic to the enemy soldiers who are common people driven to the fronts for cannon fodder. But not only sympathy for them. We must awaken them with comradely sincerity and enthusiasm so that they can stand up with us and we can fight our common enemy together."

Writers of the most varied trends, holding the most diverse views of life are creating this "National Defense Literature." Some critics thought that such a union would put an end to the struggle between the literary schools and outlooks and for this reason held the union to be a step back. Lu Hsun replied to them: "The call for a united front of writers does not mean cessation of the revolutionary literature movement nor does it constitute an obstacle to the development of the movement. Therefore, it does not mean a cessation of the sanguinary struggle against reactionaries which we have carried on for years. On the contrary, it becomes more practical, the struggle is strengthened by unity, more inclusive, and more solidly a concrete anti-Japanese, anti-traitor fight. It does not mean that the revolutionary literary movement will give up its responsibility as a leading force, but means that it has undertaken a greater responsibility."

Such was the situation on the literary front in China before the Federation was organized. To the Inaugural Conference held in Hankow, at that time the capital of China, came the most important writers, poets, dramatists, folklorists, folk bards and singers. The antagonism between the various groups of writers had by then disappeared as had the strife between political leaders. All were eager to unite in joint struggle against the enemy. The resolution about forming the Federation was accepted unanimously amid the greatest enthusiasm and within a few months of its foundation, the Federation was the largest and most creative union of writers that had ever been known in all the long history of China.

Before the war literary groups and magazines existed in only two or three of the country's biggest cities. Writers avoided living in the small provincial towns and even more so in the villages, where they could not find suitable occupations or means of livelihood. Under the exigencies of war the writers migrated to the provinces and there created new organs of the press. This brought the writers closer to the people, opening up new horizons to them. At the same time, literature, wall newspapers, theatrical performances and concerts reached the provincial areas.

At the present time the Federation has its branches in all the provinces. Chinese literary magazines point out that the importance

of the Federation's work for the country is so great, that it penetrates so profoundly into all aspects of cultural life in China, that it is possible to speak of a renaissance of this great people's cultural and literary life.

The universally recognized leader of the Federation is Mao Tun. This is the pen-name of Shen Yen-ping, the greatest of Chinese contemporary writers. His first works appeared in the magazine *Story*. In 1925 he joined the Canton Army, which made the famous "Northern Campaign," marching from the banks of the Pearl River to the banks of the Yangtze-kiang. Shen Yen-ping was engaged in political work in the army. In 1927 he was forced to emigrate to Japan where he wrote his well-known trilogy *Pursuit*, *Wavering* and *Disillusionment*, dealing with the intellectuals and the part they played in the national revolution of 1925-27. These novels were published in 1932. Mao Tun worked energetically together with Lu Hsun for a union of Chinese writers. At the present time he is dean of Sinkiang University and editor of the magazine *On The Literary Front* (*Wen I Chen Ti*). This mazagine is successfully promoting talented new writers. Among the latter, mention should be made first of Sun Yung, a former post office employee. He has translated many works of the famous Russian poet Nekrasov into Chinese. The young poet Yuan Sui-po, who first attracted attention in 1938, also merits special mention. At present he is the editor of *Culmination* (*Ting Tien*), a magazine of poetry.

The Federation has its headquarters in Chungking. Here *Literature and the War of Resistance* (*Kang Chen Wen I*), the official mouthpiece of the Federation, is published. There are three committees, of prose writers, playwrights and poets, under the Federation. These committees select the best works for publication in the magazines and in separate editions, give instruction and advice to young authors, stage performances in the villages and at the fronts and compose popular songs for the army men and the guerrilla fighters. Close contact is maintained with actors, stage directors and composers.

The Federation strives to attain close contact between its members and the people; it requires that the writers should not segregate themselves from the people, that they should live so that its interests are theirs. The biography of Tao Yuan-ming, a poet of the fifth century, was published in one of the Federation magazines. Famed for his pastoral poems, he was appointed a magistrate of the Pen Tseh district, in what is now the province of Kiangsi. But Tao Yuan-ming thought it beneath his dignity to have dealings with the populace. He returned to the Chinese Emperor the magistrate's seal and the five bushels of rice which had been sent him as his monthly remuneration. In the magazine this historical note appears together with the story of Chou Hsiu-hsia, a modern writer and Federation member. He accepted the government appointment to the magistracy of the En-ping district in the province of Kwantung. At his post he wages a vigorous struggle against traitors and enemies of the people. The peasants have dubbed him "Chou the honest," "the humane," "the model for all magistrates."

In addition to the official mouthpiece published in Chungking, the Federation publishes two magazines in Chinese and one in English. The magazine *Literary Front* (*Wen I Chan Hsian*) is published in Yenan, North China. Its contributors are chiefly young wri-

ters. Its program is to guide the cultural life in the rear of the Japanese troops. The magazine *On the Literary Front* was first published in Canton. After the capture of Canton by the Japanese, it continued publication in Kweilin, in the province of Kwangsi. On its pages appear the works of writers who live in central and southern China. Several other literary magazines are published in various cities of China by Federation branches and individual members who also contribute to the literary sections of many newspapers. It is of interest to note that the magazine *Literature and the War of Resistance*, which has a national circulation last year published 6 plays, 31 stories, 46 poems, 13 sketches, 32 articles, 66 pieces of reportage, 42 essays, 39 leading articles and 13 works by foreign authors. Two special issues of the magazine appeared: one dedicated to Lu Hsun and the other to Gorky. This magazine has more than two hundred contributors. *Chinese Writers*, the English magazine of the Federation, is published under the editorship of Cicio Mar. It features translations of Chinese prose and poetry, reportage, essays and articles on problems of Chinese literature.

The first issue of this magazine contained an article by Mao Tun, *What We Must Write About.* This is of such interest that we take the liberty of quoting from it at length. "In the first six months of the war—this is but a very rough and arbitrary division—most literature took for its theme the great and heroic events of the period. The writers pictured the bravery, determination, intelligence and hope of the Chinese people, their decision to sacrifice, and confidence of final victory. Attempts of this kind, lacking deep thought and experience, are one phase of

Ting Ling

our writing—a phase with overemphasis on the description of events to the neglect of human nature. It is true that we must first have a structure into which the person of the story may be fitted; but the bravery, determination, intelligence, conviction and hope of the Chinese people must be expressed in the characters. . . .

"The second half year was marked by a change in emphasis from events to men. From time to time the critics have reminded us to create real and living characters. China in the war will never lack new patterns, for the people are finding new leaders all the time and the personalities of the soldiers today are entirely different from those of the past; while the people are gradually taking on their shoulders the tremendous tasks of the war.

"On the other hand there are the swindlers of the people—the wartime bureaucrats, the new profiteers and the new pseudo-propa-

gandists. . . . The struggle of the Chinese people is being fought on three fronts; resisting aggression, winning backward elements over to the camp of resistance and drastically annihilating all that is bad and corrupt. Final victory will be assured only when the struggle is carried on in these three directions at the same time. This is the fundamental of our time and also the 'reality' which must be grasped by our writers.

In addition to inspiring the people to fight the aggressor, it is essential that the writers of today help to expose the traitors, greedy swindlers, selfish monopolists and conspiring political opportunists. We must describe representative people of this new period against the background of the old generation in their death struggle. There are those who think that description of the corruption of the landlords, gentry and intellectuals who monopolize activities without working, can only create general discouragement, but such anxiety is ill-founded. The sincere indignation which corruption has caused and its exposure by our writers has met with a positive response."

Mao Tun notes that of late the trend in Chinese literature is in this very direction, and along this line great success has been achieved. "New characters have appeared," writes Mao Tun. "Hua Wei[1] is one of the dregs of feudal order. Chabanchek Mackay[2] is a very representative task-assuming peasant of our time. In *Northern Steppes*, by Pi Yeh, we hear the self-confident and victorious laughter of young fighters in the face of bitter struggle. We meet two new characters: 'Black Tiger,' a guerrilla fighter of humble birth, and 'Little Kwei,' a ten year old peasant orphan. In the collectively written play *Sudden Onset* we see how cheerfully the 'Woman Wearing a Red Flower' joins the new struggle as though she were attending a great banquet; and how 'Uncle Tan,' the rich peasant, and 'Mr. Tung,' the chief of the village council, though they are still imbued with the spirit of the old generation, become eager for revenge and struggle! Then there is 'Little Tu'[1] who sheds his blood for his country and is an example of the new warriors that are developing under fire.

"Some people say that these characters are not lofty or imposing heroes, but only incomplete and rough sketches. Yet, it can scarcely be denied that a number of new representative types have been described by our writers. The seed has now been sown and one day we will reap a great harvest."

In this same article Mao Tun dwells on the new features in Chinese literature. He writes: "The appearance of *Mr. Hua Wei* has not only aroused general interest but it has also impelled our young writers to study and investigate the ugliness that is sometimes hidden beneath a dazzling exterior. This also is a new development of the past six months.

"Some critics have said that this is a sign and expression of pessimism, but I believe that it is just the reverse. It indicates how deeply writers are beginning to observe the life about them. In the first period of the war of resistance, it was expected that

[1] The hero of the story *Mr. Hua Wei*, by Chang Tin-yi, appearing in the magazine *On the Literary Front*.

[2] The hero of a story by Yao Shueh-yin appearing in *On the Literary Front*. For the English version see No. 2, *International Literature*, 1939.

[1] The hero of the story *One Week and One Day*, by Lo Pin-ki, appearing in the anthology *One Day in Greater Shanghai*, edited by Mao Tun.

two camps would be formed. Those opposed to aggression were expected to champion resistance, while the others—the black sheep—would keep themselves aloof from the war. This mistaken idea has been corrected in what is being written. Authors, who are merely engrossed in superficialities, can never see all the ugliness behind the shield of resistance. The 'deep analysis of the nucleus of life' has many phases; but unearthing cancers concealed beneath rugged, healthy exteriors, is one. There are still some writers eager to ignore facts, but there are also those who are courageous and unafraid. . . .

"People frequently say that most of our writers know only the lives of intellectuals; and it is true that there has not been much description of the new weaknesses which have beset our writers. . . . Nowadays there are 'intellectuals in favor of the war of resistance' whose primary function is to hold meetings and to talk. They have never actually done any work themselves, but always direct others; and whenever they are dissatisfied with the results they tightly knit their brows and cry out, 'Again you are wrong. Again you are wrong.' They seem to be weary of staying in the rear and dream of going to the front; but they neither go to the front nor perform their work in the rear with enthusiasm."

Pointing out that Lin Lin has written about these people in an article *Wartime Oblomovs* in the *National Salvation Daily News* (*Chin Wang Jih Pao*), Mao Tun asks: "Should not such men be exposed so that the people can protect themselves against them? A good deal has been written condemning traitors and political op-

The Attack *Woodcut by Vo Chzha*

portunists, but no graphic account has been given of their 'theories' and activities so that the people can arm themselves with a clear and vivid picture which will enable them to spot the traitors in their community. There have been many works describing traitors. But these people are of many types. They wear many different masks in the camp of resistance in order to carry on their nefarious activities, and not all of these types have been portrayed by us to enable people better to recognize their internal enemies. In a word, we need to speed up our work of exposure."

Mao Tun points to yet another achievement of Chinese literature in the recent period. He writes: "The writers have begun systematically and discriminatingly to describe the most typical great and heroic incidents. The finest illustration is the collectively written three act play called *Taierhchuang*.[1]

"In the past we have had a good deal of writing about the Doomed Battalion[2] and also the one act play, *Battle of the Fortified City*. The difference between these works and *Taierhchuang* lies in the fact that the former, though they have as a criterion the expression of the moral significance of the incident, stress the externals of bloody battle in the hope of grasping the nucleus by giving us stirring scenes with big guns and many fusillades. By avoiding the methods of historical plays, the latter (*Taierhchuang*) presents a story, fictitious yet true to the essential facts, which embodies the most vital meaning of the episode by showing the cooperation between the people and the soldiers behind the firing lines. Adoption of this method has led to much progress in our writing. The writers of *Taierhchuang* did not confine their vision to the bloody clash for a village or a trench, they interpreted the meaning of the great victory of Taierhchuang by linking up the military operations with the political work among the people in the war district of Hsuchow before the battle and with the aggravation of the internal difficulties in the enemy's country."

Collective writing and literary reportage are extremely popular with Chinese writers. In an article entitled *War Time Development of Chinese Literature* Kuo Mo-jo, a noted writer who holds an important post in the political administration of the Chinese Army, explains this phenomenon as follows: "In order that their writings may readily and comprehensively mirror the realities of wartime society, many writers have adopted the method of 'collective writing' in preference to individual strivings at a snail's pace. Again, in order that the events of the various war fronts may be promptly and accurately relayed to the readers, many writers have adopted the form of 'reportage literature' in their writings.

"There is no necessity here to enumerate the titles of the works by these writers. Suffice it to say, 'collective writing' and 'reportage literature' may be considered as two glorious products evolved from the present literary activities. From another angle, it may be said that other forms of literature, such as novels, poetry, drama and sketches, are likewise arousing the people to support the war of resistance and keeping the national cause alive in the minds of the readers. It is true that these works cannot

[1] During the fighting in the south of Shantung province in 1938 the Chinese army routed large Japanese forces and won an important victory near Taierhchuang.

[2] Reference is to the small group of brave men who volunteered on a mission of certain death so as to cover the retreat of Chinese forces from Shanghai.

yet be described as having attained the highest standard of literature. However, the seeds for healthy development of our literature have been sown; consequently it will not be long before the plant will flourish and bear fruit."

As we see, the ideas of two of the greatest writers in modern China, Mao Tun and Kuo Mo-jo, are in full agreement and are expressed in almost identical words.

"Broad highway is before us," states Mao Tun in conclusion, "and we will soon succeed if we cling to our principle of describing representative characters in representative events! But, naturally, the problems to be solved and the difficulties and shortcomings to be surmounted are still numerous."

In the article already cited, Kuo Mo-jo points out that among the most important tasks facing Chinese literature at present are the following: Through literary writings, to reflect in bold light the life of the masses in the course of the war of resistance, to set forth revolutionary heroism found in the struggle for national liberation and in a critical light to disclose all influences that hamper the prosecution of the war;

To fight against the ideas of compromise, surrender, dissension and all traitorous and Trotskyite plots to stop the war of resistance;

To carry on active propaganda and educational work by literary instrumentalities among the masses;

To develop and guide the work of writers, correct their errors, create and support the literary and educational organizations in the various army units and on the enemy occupied territories, and to promote the creation of literature for children.[1]

It is these problems that the Federation of Chinese Writers is striving to solve.

VLADIMIR ROVER

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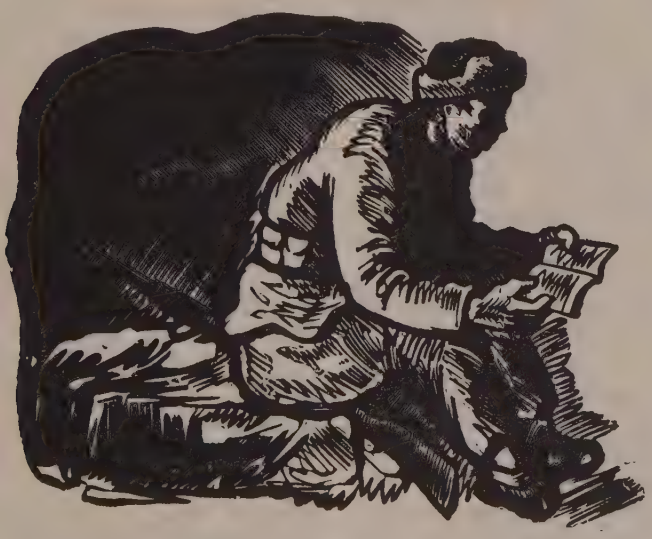
[1] *War Time Development of Chinese Literature*, by Kuo Mo-jo, in *China Today*, October 1939.



The Partizan Fighter Studies
Woodcut by the Chinese artist Li Tzug

Soviet Literature in Bulgaria

THE RUSSIAN CLASSICS

In the middle of last century Belinsky, when reviewing early efforts of Bulgarian poets, cautioned the few Bulgarian intellectuals of that time not to be carried away by Slavophilism: "Study and learn, renowned Bulgars!"

Bulgarians have heeded the counsel of the great Russian critic.

The historical conditions, the affinity of languages, the profoundly social character of Russian letters and of Russian thought—all these, from the second half of last century to the present day, have predetermined the manifold and profound Russian influence on Bulgarian culture. The research of Iv. D. Shishmanov, G. Bakalov, M. Arnaudov, T. Minkov, Boyan Penyev and other authorities in the history of literature, has shown this influence to be immense and to have begun already in the middle of last century when the new Bulgarian literature emerged. Such writers as Liuben Karavelov, Christo Botyev, P. R. Slaviekov, Iv. Vazov and Aleko Konstantinova literally grew up on Russian literature and matured under the beneficient influence of the Russian classics. So much have Pushkin and Lermontov, Shevchenko and Nekrasov, together with Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky given Bulgarian literature that, but for them, it might have remained inferior to the present day. The fundamental and indissoluble connection between Bulgarian literary thought and Russian classic literature has been brought to light with the help of Iv. D. Shishmanov's study of the influence of Shevchenko on Bulgarian poetry in the pre-liberation period, M. Arnaudov's study of Pushkin and his influence in the formation of Vazov's poetic talent, studies by Yavorov, Kirill Christov and many others.

The investigations of George Bakalov are most thorough and systematic. In a number of works he traces the influence of Russian revolutionary thought on Bulgarian literary and social life. The great democrats of the last century—Hertzen, Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky, and Belinsky as well—contributed to the formation of Botyev's and Karavelov's *Weltanschauung*, and to their influence on all the revolutionary intellectuals of Bulgaria during the period of the struggle for national liberation. Bakalov's studies of G. S. Rakovsky, Botyev and Karavelov and of their contact with Russian revolutionary organizations explain a great deal in the development of the outlook and social activity of these writers.

Russian classic literature is an open book to Bulgarian writers: they can read the original. For Bulgarian intellectuals, one can say, the Russian language is second only to the mother tongue. Doubly oppressed—politically by the Turkish sultans and spiritually by the Greek church which destroyed the Bulgarian written language and threatened to destroy the Bulgarian national consciousness—the people of Bulgaria had hardly any literature or literary traditions, and found in Russian literature as well as in Russian social thought an inexhaustible source of knowledge and an avenue to mankind's cultural treasures.

The beginnings of a real literary life among Bulgarians dates back to the early seventies of the last century when Bulgarian emigrés in Rumania and Odessa published a number of translations and original works. Botyev made a translation of *Kremutsy Kord*, a drama by Kostomarov. Gogol's *Taras Bulba* was translated by Nesho Bonchev, a young literary critic of great promise, who died prematurely. His translation to this day retains its value as a work of art. Liuben Karavelov wrote poetry in the style of Shevchenko and Koltsov. P. R. Slaveikov translated a series of poems by Pushkin.

Their personal contact with progressive Russian circles gave Botyev and Karavelov an opportunity to become familiar with the ideas of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov and with the struggle of the Russian people against the power of land-

lords and capitalists. Intellectuals who were educated in Russia brought to Bulgaria a wealth of Russian literature. The first textbooks in the schools were Russian. The Russian language and Russian literature were taught as compulsory subjects.

The cultural level and political intelligence of the average citizen, peasant or worker, in Bulgaria, is unquestionably higher than that of the average citizen, peasant or worker, in neighboring Balkan States. This is obviously due to the broad influence of Russian culture, of Russian social thought and especially of Russian literature.

MAXIM GORKY

No writer is more vitally connected with the growth of literary and spiritual culture in Bulgaria than Maxim Gorky. Almost simultaneously with his rise in Russia, the name of Gorky became known in Bulgaria. Hardly had *Makar Chudra* and *Chelkash* appeared in Russian than they were made available to the Bulgarian reading public. Interest in Gorky's work grew still more with the appearance of *The Old Woman Izergil*. The song *The Sun Rises and Sets* from Gorky's *The Lower Depths* was for decades the most popular song of young people, children and adults in Bulgaria.

First and greatest of those to popularize Gorky in Bulgaria was G. I. Bakalov, with whom Gorky maintained an intimate personal contact. As early as 1900 Bakalov translated *Chelkash* and other stories by Gorky. Since then Gorky's short stories and novels have been consistently popular throughout the country. A three-volume edition of his complete works appeared in 1905. The name of Gorky was on the lips of everybody. His portrait decorated the rooms of every worker and intellectual. It became fashionable to wear a black shirt with dangling girdle straps.

Gorky's dramas, now a permanent feature in the repertoire of all theaters in Bulgaria, were at that time an occasion of violent rapture, calling forth endless ovations. After *The Lower Depths* was performed in Sofia, the public organized an impressive demonstration. This play, together with *The Philistines* and *The Barbarians*, has been shown in every theater as well as by amateur companies throughout the country. Gorky's books have been widely read.

After the publication of *The Mother*, when the bourgeois press all over the world declared Gorky a "finished" writer, a movement arose in Bulgaria to defend the great writer in the press and at public assemblies.

The influence of Gorky rose to new heights after 1918. Everyone manifested interest in every new book of his. His every word found a lively response in the consciousness of the widest social circles. He had already become "dangerous" for official opinion, which was violently opposed to him.

In the years between 1900 and 1915, Anton P. Chekhov alongside of Gorky won his way to the heart of the Bulgarian reading public. His stories and, later, his plays, appeared in several volumes. Chekhov's popularity, however, is based primarily on his plays.

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

Before Mayakovsky emerged on the literary scene, Bulgarian poetry was subjected to the influence of the Russian symbolists. In the two decades, from 1900 to 1920, the young generation of Bulgarian poets was irresistibly attracted by the poetry of Blok, Bryussov, Balmont and Sologub. In so far as this influence enriched the language with new forms, images and expressions, it was beneficial, but negative was the influence of the anti-social tendencies and unprincipled estheticism of Balmont and Sologub, which for many years held Bulgarian poetry and nearly the entire Bulgarian literary life captive in the nebulous realm of idealism and metaphysics.

The Russian Symbolists and Futurists had a profound influence on the poetry of Geo Milyev, Emanuel Dimitrov, Lyudmil Stoyanov and many younger poets. The first was influenced by the strong and polyphonic work of young Mayakovsky; the second was under Balmont's influence; the third under that of Bryussov and Blok. From their pens came the most significant translations of Russian symbolistic poetry.

Blok's poem *The Twelve* with its new, original style and language, and particularly with its emphatic acceptance of the revolution, made an immediate and striking impression on Bulgarian writers. The poetry of Mayakovsky especially contributed to the acceptance of the revolution in the consciousness of the Bulgarian intelligentsia. Mayakovsky's importance grew steadily, commensurate with the rise of the Soviet influence in the field of art and culture.

Mayakovsky's first adherent in Bulgaria was Geo Milyev. An admirer of Futurism and himself a Futurist, Geo Milyev accepted Mayakovsky first of all because of his Futurism, because of the extravagant structure of his images and his rhythms.

The results, however, of Mayakovsky's influence, went further than sheer extravagance. The Futurist Mayakovsky proved to be profoundly vital in content, a realist and a master craftsman, actually "the best poet of our Soviet epoch." He transformed the idealist and Futurist Geo Milyev into a consistent and passionate revolutionary, who in his poem *September* gave an impressive portrayal of the peoples uprising in Bulgaria, in September, 1923.

Geo Milyev paid with his life for the poem *September*. First condemned to one year's imprisonment, he was a month later, in March 1925, brutally murdered by a band of blackguards and buried in an unknown grave.

Mayakovsky's influence was great also on other young poets, who were searching their way through the entanglement of the era's chief literary schools—obsolete symbolism, pseudo-revolutionary expressionism and the genuinely revolutionary realism of Mayakovsky.

Before the military coup d'etat of May 19, 1934, certain poems by Mayakovsky—*Left March, Story of How the Molder Ivan Kozyrev Settled in a New Apartment, Stunning Facts, Poem About A Difference of Taste, Brother Writers, Black and White*—were widely accepted for publication in the progressive press. Angel Todorov, Khr. Radevsky, Lyudmil Stoyanov and others can be mentioned along with Geo Milyev as the translators of Mayakovsky.

OTHER SOVIET WRITERS

Unusual interest in the works of Soviet writers was manifested from the very first days of the Revolution, in the years when Soviet literature was being created.

A foremost place and wide popularity was enjoyed by the short stories of Mikhail Zoshchenko, which depict peculiarities of Soviet life. They were printed in all newspapers and magazines of the capital and provinces. This interest is sustained to this very day. *What the Nightingale Sang About* and other stories by Zoshchenko reveal that the Soviet reader searches for the truth about himself, and is capable of laughing at his own shortcomings.

The first novels of Alexei Tolstoy, among them *The Year 1918*, and certain of his fantastic stories, were translated and published immediately after their publication in the Russian language. Though Alexei Tolstoy was a well-known author even before the Revolution, he has by his own admission found real scope for his talent only in the post-revolutionary period. At the present time he is one of the writers most popular among the Bulgarian readers. Practically all of his significant works, including *Peter the Great*, have been translated. The novel *Bread*, translated at the end of 1938, was suppressed by the censorship. Some of Tolstoy's books, such as *The Golden Key* and others, have appeared in two editions.

And Quiet Flows the Don and *Soil Upturned*, by M. Sholokhov have been translated into Bulgarian and have a wide circle of readers. The fourth part of *And Quiet Flows the Don* has not appeared and publishers are benig showered by letters, inquiring why the concluding book of the novel has not appeared. Critics emphasize the author's creative power, his rich language and exceptional keenness of observation. The broad epic intonations of his novels seem to emphasize the vast potentialities, the power and significance of the country which is creating a new life on one-sixth of the earth.

Translated ten years ago, A. Fadeye'vs novel *The Nineteen* still reads with undiminished interest. The truthful realism of the events described lend it moreover a high perceptional value. The reader is oriented in the struggle of the masses for Soviet power, in the rout of the intervention in the Far East. The author has undoubted influence on many young Bulgarian writers.

The same can be said of A. Serafimovich, the author of the novel *The Iron Flood*. It appeared in a Bulgarian translation at the same time as *The Nineteen* and powerfully reveals to the Bulgarian reader the mighty movement of the peoples in South Russia and the Ukraine.

The novel *Tsushima* by Novikov-Priboy gave the Bulgarian reader a striking picture of the bureaucratism and collapse of the tsarist regime, of the chaos in administration, of the cruelty and stupidity displayed by "officials" and of the helplessness of the people who were deprived of all rights. *Tsushima* has made the author known to wide circles of readers who avidly search in Soviet literature for knowledge as well as to gratify their interest in works of art. Apart from *Tsushima*, *The Sea Is Calling*, *Women at Sea*, *Baptism at Sea*, by the same author, have also been translated into Bulgarian.

Diamonds to Sit On, *The Little Golden Calf*, *Little Golden America*, these books by the remarkable Soviet story-tellers Ilf and Petrov, have enjoyed unusual success. *The Little Golden Calf* was printed in two editions and *Diamonds to Sit On* was

serialized in the *Zarya*, the most widely circulated newspaper in the country.

F. Gladkov's novel *Energy* was well received.

All the novels of Ilya Ehrenburg have been translated.

Soviet literature was widely published in Bulgaria before 1934. But between 1934 and 1939 comparatively few Soviet novels and stories have been published. These include *Armored Train* by Vsevolod Ivanov, *The Courtyard* by A. Karavayeva, *The Decomposed* by L. Seifullina, *Chapayev* by D. Furmanov, *The Pacific* by Vladimir Lidin, *I Love* by Avdeyenko, *Red Planes Fly East* by P. Pavlenko, *Life of M. Gorky* by I. Gruzdev, *Life of Pushkin* by V. Veresayev.

Many Soviet writers for children enjoy immense popularity. Numerous poems by K. Chukovsky, Marshak, and Barto have been translated in splendid resonant poetry. Certain tales by M. Ilyin, Perelman, P. Panch and others have also been translated.

SOVIET POETRY

Many objective reasons have militated against Soviet poetry attaining that breadth of influence which Russian classic literature had.

Several examples will be cited to demonstrate how the works of Soviet poets are treated by the official censorship. *Left March* by Mayakovsky, the *Stonemason* and *Kinzhal* (*Dagger*) by V. Bryussov were suppressed. The introductory and final lines of Yesenin's poem *Spring* were eliminated. N. Aseyev's *May First Fulfilled* was suppressed entirely, as was Jamboul's *Song of the Peoples' Spring*. Two lines against landlords were cut from Pavlo Tychina's poem *Ukrainian Wind*. The second half of *Cafe* by S. Gorodetsky was red-pencilled by the censor.

These poems, it should be noted, were published more than once before and now the censors mutilate them whenever they are included in separate anthologies. The original creative work of Bulgarian writers is no less strictly censored.

Several police measures, which have become less harsh only recently, tend to fence the Bulgarian reader off from any contact with Soviet poetry. It stands to reason, however, that certain books, anthologies and copies of magazines find their way into the country and are eagerly read, especially by the writers. "Russian Books," a book firm that sells exclusively Soviet literary and scientific books, has been organized in Sofia. Individual poems by well known Soviet poets have been translated in various editions. *Accordion* by A. Zharov, *Soviet Love Lyrics* and other works have appeared in separate books. There is an *Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry*, compiled and translated by one person. But this very fact that one and the same author sought to translate fifty poets, each of whom has a literary physiognomy of his own, lends this book a sketchy, incomplete quality. Nevertheless it acquaints the reader, even though formally, with the chief representatives of Soviet poetry. Sergei Yesenin, A. Surkov, V. Kazin, B. Pasternak, N. Aseyev, Vera Inber, Jamboul, A. Zharov, Ilya Selvinsky, Pavlo Tychina, Eduard Bagritsky, V. Lugovskoi, S. Gorodetsky, Lebedev-Kumach and others are known in Bulgaria.

The translators of Soviet poetry include almost all the representatives of progressive literature in Bulgaria—Angel Todorov, Nikolai Khrelkov, Maria Grubeshliyeva, Lyudmil Stoyanov, Krum Penyev, Kamen Zidarov, Pantelei Mateyev and others. These are all poets who have in a smaller or greater degree felt in themselves the beneficent influence of Soviet poetry.

Only the most significant names have been mentioned in this brief sketch of the influence of Soviet literature in Bulgaria. V. Katayev, Lev Kassil, A. Lunacharsky, V. Kirpotin, I. K. Luppol, are well known also.

LYUDMIL STOYANOV

Sofia

Soviet People to Stalin

The sixtieth birthday of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin was widely celebrated by the peoples of the Soviet Union and by progressive people throughout the world. Meetings were held on this notable occasion in every town, village and hamlet in the U.S.S.R. Famous men and women of the Soviet Union spoke at these meetings on the life and revolutionary work of the great leader of the peoples. Among them were political leaders and Stalin's associates, and also scientists, men of letters, artists and actors, who told about the occasions when they had met Stalin personally, and spoke of what he has done for the arts and sciences, and of his part in the development of Soviet culture.

In speaking of Stalin the late Konstantin Stanislavsky, creator and director of the Moscow Art Theater, once said: "How much good he has done for us actors! We are grateful to him for all this!"

And these words—"How much good he has done for us"—were the keynote of the enthusiastic utterances of all the representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia, of all groups of workers in the field of Soviet culture. The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., which has elected Joseph Stalin an honorary member of the Academy, wrote in its birthday greetings: "Your part in victorious Socialist construction is exceptionally great. History knows of no scientist who accomplished in a lifetime as much as you have already accomplished during the years you have lived. There is not a single field of Socialist construction, either of theory or of practice, the development of which is not associated with your activity. We have no words with which to describe fully and forcefully your exceptional role in the magnificent work of Socialist construction . . .

"Like Lenin, you are a beacon light for the whole of progressive mankind. The names of Lenin and Stalin will live in the minds of future generations.

"You have set an example from which veteran scientists and scientists of the younger generation in the Soviet Union learn how to work and how to attain victories. For us you are an inexhaustible source of creative thought. Your name inspires Soviet scientists to the attainment of greater heights of theory and practice. . ."

On December 21, 1939, Soviet scientists joined workers, collective farmers, all professional workers in the land of the Soviets, in sending Stalin their congratulations, their best wishes for "many long years of health to the good and glory of our great homeland and of all progressive humanity." By tens and hundreds of thousands congratulations and greetings were received from all parts of the U.S.S.R., and from all over the world. In the course of many days *Pravda* published a continuous stream of greetings and congratulatory messages which had come from different organizations and individual persons. It took hundreds of newspaper columns merely to list the names of those who sent in the greetings.

As an expression of their feelings for Stalin artists painted new canvases, mu-

sicians composed new cantatas, scientists made public their new achievements in the field of research. At a meeting in Alma-Ata the aged Jamboul, famous Kazakh folk singer, or *akyn*, recited his new poem, dedicated to Stalin on his sixtieth birthday:

Who did vow his pledge to Lenin?
Who fulfilled and held it sacred?
Who's our treasure sought for ages?
Who's the chosen of all peoples?
Heart and strings replied to me:
Stalin, who's without an equal.

The peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia now emancipated from Polish oppression, were particularly fervent and enthusiastic in their greetings to Stalin. S. O. Pritytsky, Vice-Chairman of the Provisional Administration of Byelostock Region, a man who went through gruesome tortures at the hands of gendarmes, writes: "In the most difficult moments of life we drew strength from the image of Stalin, from Stalin's words. Often, when Communists and members of the Young Communist League foregathered, we dreamed about our future. And when we spoke about the future we always dreamed of meeting Stalin. When I sat in prison condemned for life, when I heard the sentence of death by hanging read twice, when my blood was flowing under the blows of the rubber bludgeon of the prison guards!— I ever thought of Stalin, and somehow I was always confident that I would see this man, of whom the thought alone assuages the suffering of millions of people. . .

"The image of Stalin was with us during our hard underground struggle against the Polish oppressors of the Byelorussian people. Inspired by Stalin, the people of Western Byelorussia are now building their new, happy life. On this great day, his sixtieth birthday, we wish Comrade Stalin long years of life and health for the happiness of all mankind."

I. Kravchuk, a member of the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine, a man who was for many years confined in a Polish prison, recalls the historic session of the

Stalin — the Strategist
Sculpture by Petrashevich

Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., which united Western Ukraine with Soviet Ukraine. He writes: "Here we are in the hall. One thought is ours: Now we shall see Comrade Stalin. Simply and unobtrusively he appeared. A storm, an irrepressible wave of ovation, of shouts of enthusiasm, rose to greet him. For a moment I saw tears in the eyes of the greyhaired Professor Studinsky, and a film of moisture in the eyes

Reconnaissance

Painting by Chastov, a Red Army man in the Volga Military Region

J. V. Stalin in the Arsenal at Tsaritsin

Painting by N. G. Soin, a Red Army man

Lenin and Stalin Examining the map of the Electrification of Russia
Painting by D. Nalbandyan

Leaving to Join Budyonny *Painting by Semyonov, a Red Army man*

of Maria Kich,—both members of the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine. I applauded with everybody else, hailing our dear Stalin. . .

"I saw Comrade Stalin again at the reception accorded to our commission by the leaders of the Party and the Government. Without any ceremony Stalin greeted us. Turning to me he inquired: 'And how do you feel?'

"I expressed gratitude for his care and went on to tell about the new, joyous and happy life which has begun in Drohobych and Borislavov. I promised that the oil workers in the Western Ukraine would work so well that Comrade Stalin should say: 'Excellent'.

"After that we were photographed. Comrade Stalin saw that all were seated and then sat down himself, last.

"Our leader and teacher is able to read one's heart and mind, deeply at first glance, is able to rear people lovingly and tenderly, for, in the words of the poet, he is the most human man, the same as Lenin.

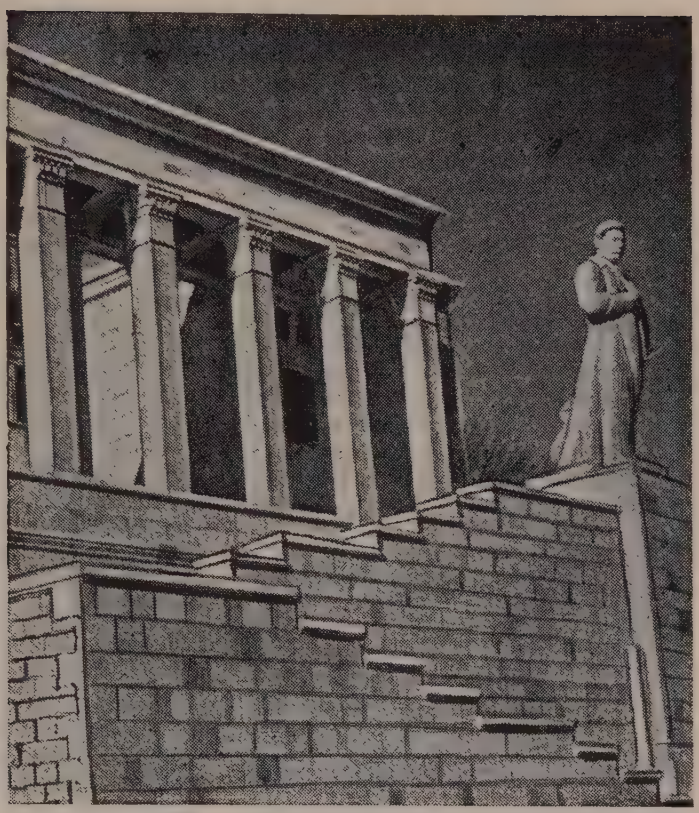
"The people of former Western Ukraine are particularly alive to Comrade Stalin's concern for them. The people know the name of the sun of freedom and happiness which for the first time has risen over the long-suffering land stretching from the Zbruch to the Carpathians: Stalin, say the people, is our sun, great and undimmed."

Exhibitions of literature and art have been opened in museums, libraries, universities and art galleries of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tbilisi and other large centers. Great interest has been aroused among visitors by some poems which Stalin wrote as a youth—*Morning, The Old Man and Nica, When the Moon is Full and Bright, Eristavi*—and which are on display at the exhibition "Stalin and Literature" arranged by the Leningrad Museum of the Institute of Literature at the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Shown here for the first time in Russian translation, these poems were published in Georgian newspapers in the middle of the 1890's. The exhibition "Stalin and Fine Literature," organized by the Moscow State Literary Museum, demonstrates the immense part Stalin has played in the development of Soviet Literature. Considerable space in the display is given to the theme—"Comrade Stalin in Soviet Literature." A special exhibit contains selected quotations from the speeches and works of Stalin, in which he made reference to characters from the works of Gogol, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Chekhov and other writers, Russian as well as foreign. A special section—"Stalin and Gorky"—displays various photographs, pictures by Y. Kravchenko, Kozmichev, Bendel and other artists.

"Stalin and Soviet People in Pictorial Art" was the subject of a big exhibition of paintings, sculptures, drawings and etchings arranged in the spacious halls of the Tretyakov Gallery during the celebration.

Writing of this remarkable exhibition in the *Pravda*, Igor Grabar, a prominent Soviet artist, said: "The exhibition is the latest word in Soviet art, its present day. Most of the works were completed in 1939 and even as late as the last months of the year." Grabar singles out a number of paintings and sculptures such as "Conversation of J. V. Stalin with the peasants of Ajaria" by the Georgian artist A. Kutateladze, "A Meeting of Heroes" by A. Bubnov, portraits of Stalin and Papanin by A. Gerasimov, sculptures by Mukhina, the mural "Life has Improved, Life has Become Joyous" by Frich-Khara, as deserving special mention. He then goes on to say: "The exhibition in the Tretyakov Gallery is an important event in Soviet art. A common stirring idea unites the large number of good paintings and sculptures which have been assembled. The visitor to the exhibition carries away an indelible and vivid impression of Comrade Stalin's life and of his remarkable activity."

Highly interesting is the portrait gallery of Stalin's comrades-in-arms and famous persons of the Soviet Union, which occupies a large section of the exhibition.



Entrance to the Stalin Museum in Baku. This Museum is devoted to the history of the Bolshevik organizations of Azerbaijan and contains a large collection of documents illustrating the life and revolutionary activity of J. V. Stalin in Baku and Transcaucasia

Outstanding works by young artists on display are "Portrait of the Actress Orochko" by M. Volkova; "Portrait of the Writer L. Leonov" by K. Dorokhov, and others.

"Stalin and the Red Army", an exhibition of three hundred paintings, water-colors, drawings, and sculptures made by artists serving in the ranks of the Red Army, was arranged at the Central House of the Red Army in Moscow. Art works on display here arrived from the Far East, the Ukraine, the Urals, the Volga Region, Leningrad and so on. Many canvases of the Red Army artists are devoted to individual episodes in the life of the peoples' leader and in his revolutionary work. The Red Army men Usipenko and Malinko, students of the Grekov painting studio, have produced a series of fine landscapes that portray Gori, Stalin's birthplace, and the hamlet of Tkviavi, where Stalin's friend, the flaming revolutionary, Lado Ketskhoveli, lived. The Red Army artist Voronin presented a painting on Stalin's activity on the southern front. The new battle pictures of M. Domashenko—"Death of a commissar," "Troika," "Barricade"—are colorful and impressive.

Over 500 works of art are on display at the exhibition "Stalin in the Works of Masters of Folk Art," arranged at the Moscow Institute of the Art Industry. New murals by A. Kotyagin, I. Fomichev, N. Starkov and others are shown by the Mstera *artel*, Ivanovo Region. The Fedoskin *artel* presents several new portraits of Stalin. There is a large display of artistic needlework and weaving. A master craftswoman of the Gorodets *artel*, V. Buneyeva, sewed a portrait of Stalin with vari-colored thread. The Turkmenian rugs with interwoven portraits of Lenin, Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov are very attractive. There is a well-wrought large tapestry portraying a public celebration

in honor of the Constitution and Stalin, the work of Kazakh weavers. Among other exhibits are Kazakhstan ceramics, stone-carvings, carvings in mammoth ivory by the Tobolsk bone-carvers and the Lomonosov *artel*, Archangel Region. Lace-makers from Vologda displayed eleven emblems of the Union Republics and the emblem of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet press gives amazing figures on the editions of Stalin's books, which are read and studied by millions of working people all over the world. During the period from 1917 to October 1939 the works of J. V. Stalin published in Russian alone numbered 217,700,000 copies. In addition 52,900,000 copies were published in other languages. Stalin's *Problems of Leninism* has been published in editions totaling 13,742,000 copies in Russian and other languages. 43,799,000 copies of Stalin's report on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. were published, and 22,202,000 copies of his report to the Eighteenth Party Congress were issued.

The works of Joseph Stalin were published in ninety-three languages in the U.S.S.R.—Russian and Kalmyk, in Ukrainian and Mordovian, in Georgian and Tatar, in Jewish, Buryat, Oirot, Karelian, Uigarian and many others. The small nationalities of the North—the Koryaks, Nanais, Evenki, Khanty—also have an opportunity to read the works of Stalin in their native languages.

Hundreds of thousands of copies of Stalin's works have appeared in English, French, German and Italian, and other foreign languages. Editions of Stalin's works in Finnish total 137,900 copies, in Bulgarian 125,000 copies, in Japanese 17,300, in Chinese 198,200.

Stalin's words of wisdom resound through the world. Stalin's thought enlightens the minds of millions of people, impels them forward.

Newspapers and magazines printed many articles dealing with the role of Stalin in the history of the Soviet Union, with the various periods of his revolutionary activity and with his historic speeches. *The Bolshevik*, theoretical and political organ of the Communist Party, published a biographical essay by M. I. Kalinin on the occasion of Comrade Stalin's sixtieth birthday (published in English under the title *Stalin: Sixty Years*), and many articles by Stalin's closest associates: "Stalin as the Continuer of the Cause of Lenin" by V. Molotov (this article was published in *International Literature*, No. 12, 1939), "Stalin, Builder of the Red Army" by K. Voroshilov, "The Great Engineer of History's Locomotive" by L. Kaganovitch, "Stalin Is Lenin Today" by A. Mikoyan, "Stalin and the Great Collective Farm Movement" by A. Andreyev, and others. This same magazine published, for the first time in Russian, early works of Stalin which appeared in 1904 and 1905 in the underground press in Georgia: "How Does Social-Democracy Understand the National Question" and "The Proletarian Class and the Proletarian Party—About the first Paragraph of the Party Rules."

Technika Molodezhi (*Technology for the Youth*), a magazine for young people, published by the Young Communist League of the U.S.S.R., printed interesting articles by the scientists and academicians I. Bardin, E. Chudakov, V. Vedeneyev and V. Obraztsov dealing with the impressive achievements in the industrialization of the country attained under the leadership of the Party and according to Stalin's plans. Writing of Stalin as a man of advanced science, Academician Otto Schmidt stated: "He teaches our men of science to think freely and boldly".

Various publishing houses issued books about Stalin and dedicated to Stalin. *Meeting Stalin*, put out by the Publishing House of Political Literature, is a collection of contemporary memoirs written by workers, collective farmers, scientists, artists, writers and other noted people of the Soviet land who tell of meeting Stalin and of conversations they had with the great leader. Among the books published is a biography of Stalin and a number of volumes of folklore about Stalin. Outstanding among the works

published on the occasion of Stalin's birthday is *The People of Flourishing Ukraine to Stalin*. It opens with a long poem *Our Own Stalin* written collectively by fourteen most prominent poets of the Soviet Ukraine. Each poet is author of a separate chapter. In addition to this poem, the anthology contains other poetry and prose by Ukrainian writers as well as works of folklore. The writers of Soviet Georgia published a large volume, splendidly illustrated and containing poems, stories and novelettes dedicated to Stalin.

Among the greetings published in the press are quite a number from outstanding foreign writers, Martin Andersen Nexö, famous Danish writer, Wanda Wasilewska, Polish writer, whose novel *Earth in Bondage* our readers are familiar with from the previous number of *International Literature*; Caesaro M. Arconada, the Spanish writer and many others.

Wanda Wasilewska writes: "A little girl stops me. A rolling ball in a fur coat.

"'Are you from Western Ukraine, auntie? Were you in Moscow?'

"Round and inquisitive her eyes shine. And then—

"'Did you see Comrade Stalin? What did Comrade Stalin say to you?'

"'No. I did not go to Moscow. I did not see Comrade Stalin.'

"Disappointment darkens her rosy countenance.

"From the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, from the Finnish marshland to the wave-washed coast of Kamchatka stretches the Soviet land, growing in strength and in wealth. Factories hum. Wings of airplanes zoom. Giant tanks rumble. Pneumatic drills bore through rocks and a river is harnessed to serve human needs. School buildings multiply and the sunlight streams in through the windows of Pioneer Palaces. Youngsters in factory crèches and kindergartens smile like flowers in a window. Dark heads and fair heads are bowed over books. The hands of children, and the toil-hardened and calloused hands of adults, reach for books. From the Moldavian girl to the lad of the tundra, from the fisherman of the ice-bound and barren lake country to the mountaineer of the alpine glades where azaleas bloom—the men and women of the Soviet Union ascend to ever greater might, growth in strength.

"I look after the girl departing, disappointed. A rolling ball in a fur coat. Stamp, stamp.... Little feet tramp on the shining asphalt pavement.

"Along thousands of streets, thousands of roads, thousands of footpaths happy Soviet children walk to a still happier, a brighter and more joyous day.

"Over a thousand ways, streets, roads and footpaths the feet of children spread afar the fame of Stalin."

The Combined Attack *by R. Frenz*

The Red Army and Art

The well-known Russian writer, Alexander Kuprin, who after many years spent as a White emigrant, returned to his native country to die a Soviet citizen, described the life of Russian soldiers of his day in the following memorable passage in *The Duel*.

". . . For the slightest slip of the tongue, for falling out of step while marching, they were cuffed savagely till the blood came, their teeth were knocked out, their ear-drums broken, they were felled to the ground. It never occurred to anyone to complain: it was all one monstrous, sinister nightmare. . . . The soldiers grew thin and hollow-cheeked and looked as vacant as idiots. In their rare moments of rest neither jokes nor laughter were ever to be heard from the tents. They were, however, compelled to make merry of an evening after roll-call. Then they would form a ring and, with an expression of dull indifference on their faces, croak dismally:

Bullets and bombs are naught
To the Russian soldier.
He meets them as he ought,
He gives them ne'er a thought!

"Then someone struck up a step-dance tune on the accordion and the sergeant bawled: 'Gregorash! Skvortsov! Out in the ring! Dance, you sons of bitches! . . . Show your high spirits, blast you!'

"They did as they were bidden, but in this dance, as in the singing, there was something wooden, something dead, that made you want to weep."

What a world of difference between this description of soldiers' "merry-making," of that dancing and singing to the accompaniment of blows and threats, and the splendid creative, living union with the arts—the stage, music, painting—that has become an inseparable part of the life of the men and the commanders of the Red Army and Navy. The ways in which the members of the two great defense forces are brought into touch with art are many and varied.

THEATERS FOR THE MEN OF THE RED ARMY AND NAVY

In the years following the Great Socialist October Revolution of 1917 a system of professional "Red Army Theaters" has been built up playing for the garrisons in all the important centers of the Soviet Union. The foremost of these theaters is the Central Red Army Theater in Moscow, directed by the gifted producer, Alexander Popov.

The present season will mark the tenth anniversary of this splendid theater, which originated and has developed within the Red Army. This theater has done a great deal to help Soviet playwrights in their work on plays dealing with the defense of the country.

Its repertoire, however, includes not only modern plays on war themes, but also a variety of other plays, such as, for instance, a historical drama dealing with the great Russian field-marshal, Suvorov, a play by Maxim Gorky, or Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The Central Theater will now be housed in an imposing new building of original architecture—in the form of a five-pointed star, the emblem of the Red Army—which has been erected for it on one of Moscow's squares. The auditorium has accommodation for two thousand people; the stage, rehearsal rooms, and the foyers, are all built and equipped according to the latest ideas in theater technics.

On a more modest scale as regards troupes and equipment are the special Red Army theaters of Kiev, Minsk (where, incidentally, a splendid new Red Army theater is now under construction), in Tashkent, and scores of other big centers in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Navy has its own theaters, too. One of the oldest of these is the Baltic Fleet Theater. All the actors are seamen and junior commanders. This year every one of the actors who was due to be demobilized applied for permission to continue in the service. The repertoire of this theater includes a very good play called *The Sea is Ours*, written by Blaustein, a navy doctor, in cooperation with Venetsianov, a writer.

The Black Sea Fleet Theater produced in 1937 a play called *Steering a Steady Course*, by a sailor named Zelikov, and last year *The Cruiser Ochakov*. The Pacific Fleet Theater is also training its own playwrights—Lieutenants Smelyakov and Chelyubeyev, Battalion Commissar Kudriavtsev and others. In addition to plays by Soviet authors, the Pacific Fleet Theater has produced Molière's *Tartuffe*, and Balzac's *Stepmother*.

NON-PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES IN THE ARMY AND NAVY

But the actors of all these theaters put together are, relatively, a mere handful compared with the vast numbers taking part in amateur art activities that are developed on a tremendous scale in literally every unit of the Red Army and Navy.

Here are a few figures that will give an idea of the mass character of these art activities. Thus, for example, in the olympiad held last year in the Kiev Special Military Area, there participated over 600 men from the units stationed in the area and 500 from the Kiev garrison. There were in all 35 collectives or groups, powerful choirs of 400 voices, an ensemble of *bandore* players, a Moldavian song and folk dance group, an orchestra of the national instruments of Azerbaijan, a Georgian ensemble which, in addition to Georgian songs and dances, interpreted those of ancient Gouria; a Bashkir ensemble, and a Ukrainian art group.

At a similar olympiad of the Moscow Military Area there were about a hundred items to be judged; every imaginable variety of orchestra, choirs, solo singers and players, reciters, dancers and acrobats were represented.

If we consider that these annual exhibitions of artistic activity in the Red Army of the various military areas are preceded by battalion, squadron, regimental, divisional, and garrison reviews, and that only the very best men are selected for the area olympiads, then we obtain a fair idea of the degree to which artistic activity has become an integral part of the life of the Red Army.

The Red Army takes a prominent part in the great creative work for the development of artistic talent and the spread

The Don Cossack Dance performed by the amateur choreographic group of Dniepropetrovsk

Goldoni's "Servant of Two Masters" at the Red Navy Theater in Vladivostok. The Red sailor Postnikov as Trufaldino; the actress Lotzkaya as Smeraldina

of amateur art activities. In the army, the youth of the Soviet Union not only undergoes military training and receives a political education, but is also provided with all the conditions for general cultural growth, for the expression and development of native talent. Quite a number of gifted young people have found in the army the opportunity to show and develop their abilities. Thus, for instance, Vasili Zakharov, a junior commander, organized in his unit a splendid Russian folksong choir. Shchigol, a Red Armyman in the ranks, is conductor of an ensemble of *bandore* players that has won popularity not only in the army units, but on scores of collective farms in the Ukraine. Finally, the renowned Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble directed by Professor Alexandrov, that has won fame throughout the U.S.S.R. and abroad as well, has developed from the non-professional artistic circles of the Red Army.

At the performances given by these talented young people in uniform, one is struck not only by the ability of some particular singer, or by the expressiveness and beauty of the rendering, which is often on a level with that of professional singers; one cannot help noting an attractiveness in their performance peculiar to the spirit of the Red Army. It is their military alertness, an uncommon briskness and vitality that leaves an unforgettable impression on the audience.

Naturally, this art could not have developed to such a degree if the talented people had been left to discover the paths to perfection for themselves. The entire command of the Red Army—from unit commanders and commissars, who are often the leaders of the art circles, up to Marshal Voroshilov, People's Commissar of Defense of the U.S.S.R.—watches with unflagging interest over the development of amateur art activity in the army. "Amateur art activity is a very important link in the struggle for the strengthening of our Red Army, for its political education, for raising the cultural level of both men and commanders," said Voroshilov. These words are always borne in mind and put into practice in the army units.

Professionals—actors, producers, composers, musicians, and artists—play a big part in spreading and fostering the love of art in the ranks of the army. The Trade Union of Art Workers of the U.S.S.R. has for the last fifteen years maintained a "cultural patronage" over the Red Army and Navy. This "patronage" has been expressed not only in the form of systematic performances given in Red Army clubs, camps and barracks. Hundreds and thousands of qualified actors, producers

singers and musicians give the army ensembles and art circles the benefit of their experience, methods and knowledge; the men thus obtain expert training and guidance.

The best theater companies, brigades of singers, musicians, and actors regularly entertain and teach the men of the Red Army and Navy in even the most distant outposts of the Soviet Union. During the last two or three years the biggest Moscow theaters—the Central Red Army Theater, the Mossoviet Theater, special brigades from the Art Theater, the Bolshoi, and the Vakhtangov Theater, have spent whole seasons with the units stationed in the Far East. At the present time these units are being entertained by the Moscow Kamerny Theater. Actors from the Bolshoi Theater and the Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater have frequently produced plays, operas, etc., on board ships of the line.

Work of this kind is very highly appreciated by the command of the Red Army. "Your songs, music, shows and concerts, your incomparable artistry are of great help in the military and political training of the Red Army, they bring culture into the army, and provide a splendid recreation for the men," Marshal Voroshilov wrote to the Presidium of the Trade Union of Art Workers.

THE RED ARMY IN SOVIET DRAMA

Some of the finest pages in Soviet drama are devoted to the Red Army. In the plays produced by Soviet theaters one finds reflected the whole history of the Red Army—from the heroic episodes of the Civil War and the struggle with the forces of foreign intervention to our own day, when this mighty army, trained and equipped according to the last word in military technique, is guarding the peaceful frontiers of the great Soviet country.

Soviet plays dealing with the defense of the country fall into two main divisions: those on the Civil War, a subject that to this day stirs the creative interest and ambition of Soviet playwrights; and those dealing with the Red Army during the years of peace and construction, when, though fully prepared for defense, it

Rehearsal

Painting by S. Ryangin

serves as a vast cultural training school for people of the new Socialist mentality.

In the first division the most popular plays are Vsevolod Ivanov's *Armored Train* and *Blockade*, Trenyev's *Lyubov Yarovaya*, Bulgakov's *The Days of the Tourbins*, Vishnevsky's *The First Cavalry Army* and *The Optimistic Tragedy*, Romashov's *The Flaming Bridge*, Bill-Belotserkovsky's *Storm*, the stage version of Furmanov's novel *Chapayev*, Korneichuk's *Wreck of the Squadron*, and Alexei Tolstoy's *Path to Victory*.

One of the first plays to be written on the Red Army—Konstantin Trenyev's *Lyubov Yarovaya*—has kept its place in the repertoire of scores of Soviet theaters (including the two best, the Moscow Art and the Maly Theaters) for the last twelve years. The public are extremely fond of it, and it is spoken of as a classic of Soviet drama. The author has been successful in reproducing not only the atmosphere of the stirring days of the Civil War, but also the personal drama of the heroine, Lyubov Yarovaya, a teacher and a representative of the finest traditions of the progressive Russian intelligentsia. It is a convincing story, told with great sincerity. Lyubov is the personification of the noble simplicity, modesty, and heroism of the Russian woman, capable of renouncing a great passion for her revolutionary ideal.

The author gives a remarkably vivid and convincing portrayal of the character of the sailor Shvandya, in whom the somewhat rough manliness of a fighter is combined with a gentle humor and the charming, almost childish naiveté of a man called upon for the first time to make history; totally unequipped with knowledge of the social laws, he feels the justice of the cause of the Revolution with all his simple, sincere heart. Shvandya is the prototype of a whole gallery of characters who never fail to win the warm sympathy of their audiences.

We meet Shvandya again in the person of Kuprianov, a sailor, in Leonid Rachmanov's *Professor Polezhayev*, one of the most popular plays of the present time. During the famine years of the Civil War the sailor comes at the head of a squad to search the premises of a professor of botany. He is looking for stores of flour hoarded by bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. He mistakes the professor for one of them, and the gown of a Doctor of Science, of Cambridge University, for a priest's cassock. But his harshness gives way to profound respect and gratitude when he begins to comprehend the purpose of Professor Polezhayev's work and its importance for the people.

Tolstoy's latest play, *Path to Victory*, tells of the daring raid made by Budyonny's cavalry on the whiteguards' rear; Lenin, Stalin, and Budyonny are seen in the play. When it was being produced last year at the Vakhtangov Theater, Marshal Budyonny delivered a series of talks to the actors and told them many interesting things about the episodes reproduced in the play.

The first play to show the Red Army in times of peace was *Between the Storms*. The leading character is an ex-partisan, an intrepid squadron commander who had reveled in the romantic side of the Civil War and found himself completely bewildered during the period of what were known as the "Frunze reforms," when the Red Army was being reorganized into a regular disciplined force that had outlived the methods and ideology of partisan warfare.

A similar subject was used by Boris Romashov in his *Fighters*, the first attempt to show members of the high command of the Red Army. The dramatic conflict in the play is based on a struggle of military principles, on the differences between the upholders of traditional military theories and innovators in the science of warfare.

An interesting contrast, not of ideas this time but of the characters of men of the Red Army, is given in *Glory*, the work of a young Soviet dramatist and poet, Victor Gusyev. This play deals with the rivalry between foolhardy intrepidity, hotheaded courage, on the one hand, and sober calculation, coolheadedness and self-control on the other. The same problem is treated in *The Sea is Ours*, mentioned above.

One of the most popular plays is Nikolai Pogodin's *Silver Hollow*. It is a play that, particularly in Alexei Popov's splendid production of it at the Central Theater of the Red Army, charms the audiences with its simple, frank representation of everyday life at a distant frontier post. It does not pretend to be a play of profound character portrayal; it is more a sketch than a drama. But it is a vivid and convincing sketch, showing the high sense of duty prevailing among the men, the remarkable friendship existing between commanders and men, the heroism of Soviet women who prove true comrades-in-arms of their husbands, and the close contact between the Red Army and the civilian population—the milions of working people who love and cherish the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army as their own.

DMITRI KALM

CORRESPONDENCE

The War and the Cultural Life of France

"The war has relegated the intellectual life of the country to the background; interest in literature and the arts is an attribute of happier days than the ones we are experiencing at the present time," one reads in French magazines. And indeed, stagnation and decline is evident in all fields of culture in France.

In September, for example, over two hundred and twenty-five monthly and weekly publications were discontinued, including *Europe*, the official mouthpiece of the *Association Internationale des écrivains pour la défense de la culture* (International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture); *Le Volontaire*, a magazine close to the *Union des intellectuels de France* (Union of French Intellectuals), and the well-known *Revue de France*.

In August the French Government had already prohibited *l'Humanité*, organ of the Communist Party, and the newspaper *Ce Soir*. The government has not only prohibited the Communist Party but has also broken up numerous Left cultural organizations, such as the French section of the International Writers' Association for the Defense of Culture, and *Paix et Liberté* (Peace and Liberty), which had been founded by Henri Barbusse.

Those periodicals which still continue publication have greatly reduced their size. *Esprit*, for instance, now comes out in thirty pages instead of the usual three hundred. Literary supplements and literary sections in the newspapers have been discontinued. Many weekly publications have begun to appear once a month.

The censor reigns supreme. Magazines frequently appear with blank columns and even blank pages, carrying pictures of "Anastassie's scissors," the contemptuous nickname for censorship.

We may mention that the press has printed a number of laudatory items and articles about Jean Jiraudoux, now head censor of France. But evidently this flattery has helped it very little.

Such publications as *Bibliographie de la France* and *Toute l'Edition*, which are devoted to information about new books, are obliged to appear once a month instead of four times, and in greatly curtailed form. This is due not only to the shortage of paper and its increased cost, not only to the mobilization of the publishers' employees, but chiefly to the fact that these magazines have nothing to write about, nothing to publicize since almost no new books are appearing.

Publishers have greatly cut down their work. Several publishing houses have temporarily stopped printing books. Others have moved into the provinces, which has meant an interruption in their work. Many are being reorganized because, as one of the directors of a large publishing house, Stock, expressed it, "hard times will create a special demand for light and entertaining literature," such as foreign novels "meant for women who are depressed in spirit, and for men who are lonely" (probably those in the barracks).

The publishing houses have long complained of sluggishness in the book market and matters have become even worse of late. Books are not being purchased. Even the book receiving the Goncourt Prize (*Le prix Goncourt*), which is the best advertisement a book can have in France, according to the October issues of the magazines will "very likely prove a disappointment for both the author and publisher from a financial point of view."

November and December are the months when the most important literary prizes are usually awarded in France: the Goncourt Prize, the Theophraste Renaudot and the Femina, the so-called "grand prizes" of the French Academy, and others. But the state of the book market is so poor now that the question has arisen as to whether it would not be advisable to postpone the awards until better times. Magazines favoring the award of prizes in 1938 are motivated solely by the consideration

that the monetary awards would help at least the few writers who receive them.

"Unemployment is almost universal among literary and art workers," notes *L'Illustration*. "All the intellectuals are experiencing particular difficulties at the present time, but it is the writers who have suffered most. They have no right to receive unemployment relief or social insurance. The families of writers who have been mobilized find themselves, in the majority of cases, in the most tragic situation," writes Jean Vignaud, chairman of the Society of Men of Letters (*Société des gens de lettres*). "No one comes to their aid, and the 'Urgent Aid' fund, which the Society has established with the moneys received as annual literary prizes and from 'voluntary contributions,' is but a drop in the ocean." Literary men cannot find employment. The Society is vainly trying to secure work for them as clerks, petty officials, etc.

The year 1939 has been termed Racine year in France, for December of this year marks the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great French writer. All France had been preparing to mark this outstanding date. When the war broke out, a discussion began in the press as to the advisability of postponing the celebrations. Plays by Racine, presented this year, are being interpreted rather surprisingly by the French press. *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, for example, attempts to interpret the tragedy *Les Perses*, which depicts the victory of the Athenians over the barbarians, as a "forecast of the victory of England and France" in the present war.

Although the theatrical season should have opened long ago, all the theaters have remained closed. It is only very recently that the newspapers have begun to urge that the theaters be opened. "Where can one find a better refuge during an air raid than in the basements of the theaters? Moreover, actors must live too, and the population will soon become accustomed to going through the streets in complete darkness," is how one newspaper puts it.

Cloakrooms, states the press, have been removed from the theaters, and even the gallery has been taken out of the *Comedie Française*, so that in the event of an alarm, the public will be able to leave the premises as quickly as possible.

Only one or two theaters have been opened so far. The new performance of the season is a sketch. Its plot is as follows: during an air raid, all the tenants of a large Paris house gather in the basement. They had been living side by side for years, but until that moment had not known each other. They strike up an acquaintance in the dimly lit basement, but even Parisian jokes and frivolity cannot withstand the fear aroused by the impending air attack. In the end it transpires that the signal was a false alarm.

The general sentiment is quite accurately portrayed in the newspaper *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, which writes: "We have suddenly been deprived of everything which made up our daily life: children playing in the public parks, paintings in the galleries, books and libraries. We feel lonely morally and spiritually, deserted in Paris, which has lost her native features."

All the elementary schools in Paris (with the exception of the Catholic schools) have been closed for two months; the museums are closed, the greater part of their possessions having been transported to the provinces. Most of the libraries in Paris, pleading the war conditions as an excuse, have ceased to function. The National Library resumed work at the end of October, but limited its visitors to one hundred persons daily in addition to which every visitor must state his reasons for borrowing a book and furnish some proof of the urgency of his work. The Mazarin and de l'Arsenal libraries have likewise been made more difficult of access. Here one can obtain entry only by special permission.

Such is the desolate picture of the disorganization which the war has wrought in the cultural life of France.

N. K.

October 1939

NEWS AND VIEWS

U.S.S.R.

COURSES FOR WRITERS OF THE R.S.F.S.R.

Courses in the form of conferences for the writers of the R.S.F.S.R. have been organized in Moscow by the Union of Soviet Writers. From the Far East, from Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk, Gorky, Voronezh, Rostov and many other cities of the republic writers have come in order to attend these courses.

According to the program they are scheduled to meet and conduct talks with Moscow writers, poets, critics and editors; to visit museums and theaters and become acquainted with the allied arts; to participate in talks on painting, the cinema, sculpture, architecture and music.

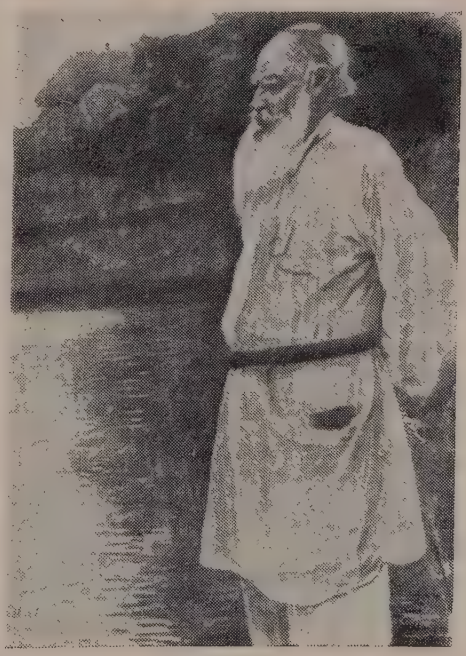
Most of the writers taking part in these courses have already had their works published in regional and central magazines. Thus, the writer Aristov has written a historical novel, *Smolensk*, dealing with the building of the Kremlin in Smolensk and the siege of that city by the Poles early in the seventeenth century. M. Sergeyenko, a Voronezh writer, the author of a collection of stories entitled *In the Footsteps of Shchors*, continues to work on the figure of this great military leader of the Civil War period, and is writing a novel about Shchors' life and heroic exploits.

Kalichenko and Gurevich, both hailing from the city of Irkutsk, have collected some valuable folklore about Stalin in the place where he lived in exile, in the former Irkutsk Province. A. Koptelov, a Novosibirsk writer, has written a novel telling about the life of the miners of the Kuznetsk Basin. A. Mironov, writer and a member of the Chelyuskin expedition, has published his *Chukotsk Stories*, in which he reveals a remarkable knowledge of the Arctic and the observation powers of a true artist.

GEORGE BRANDES ON LEO TOLSTOY

In 1908, a short time before Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, V. Sobolevsky, the editor of the newspaper *Russkiye Vedomosti*, asked George Brandes, the famous Danish critic and historian of literature, to write an article for his paper on the subject of the great Russian writer. Owing to illness George Brandes was unable to comply with the request, and wrote to Sobolevsky to that effect. This letter, unpublished until now, contains some interesting opinions about Leo Tolstoy. Here are some lines from George Brandes' letter, dated August 30, 1908:

"He [Tolstoy] is marvelous and somewhat insane; grand and original; a disciple of Jean Jacques [Rousseau] and a modern man; a voice clamoring in the desert named Russia; of him one can say thousands of things which everybody knows



Leo Tolstoy
Painting by Mikhail Nesterov

and which anybody could say as well as I can.

"I am delighted with such a story as *Master and Man*. It is unusually deep, and the description of the falling snow is superb. It was published about twenty years ago and I haven't re-read it, but I remember it perfectly.

"I admire *Resurrection* with all my heart.

"The young writers are unable to do what this great old man has done but his paradoxes on art and Shakespeare frighten me, I must confess."

INCUNABULA IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Some new first editions have been added to the collection of incunabula in the Shchedrin State Library in Leningrad. The library has acquired one of the most valuable illustrated Nurenberg editions of the Shatbehalter, printed in 1491 with exceptional artistic perfection. The book contains forty-four engravings on wood by the famous Michael Wohlgemut.

Of exceptional interest also is the *Cracow Mass Book*, printed in Nurenberg in 1494. It is only a few of the world's greatest collections of incunabula that can boast of possessing this prayerbook. Among other valuable rarities is the *Benedictine Journal (Excerpts from the Breviary)* of the St. Justin Congregation. This book has been presented to the library by Academician D. Rozhdestvensky. Until now no library in the whole world could show a single copy of this edition, and it was marked in the antiquarian catalogues as not to be found.

STATE MEDICAL LIBRARY

The twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the Moscow State Scientific Medical Library of the People's Commissariat of Health of the U.S.S.R. has recently been celebrated. It is patronized by professors, doctors and workers in medicine and science. The library contains about 300.000 volumes, a great many of which are highly valuable editions. It is the largest institution of its kind in the U.S.S.R.

Subscribers living outside Moscow receive photostats of the requisite texts and illustrations. This service is made possible through a photolaboratory belonging to the library. The latter also publishes a bulletin, entitled *New Medical Literature*.

This year the library has taken upon itself to guide the work of the medical libraries of the Union republics. A special collection center has been set up, the task of which is to acquire books for these libraries. More than twelve thousand volumes have been sent from Moscow to Tashkent and libraries have also been sent to Sakhalin, Birobijan and to other places.

DARWIN'S JUBILEE

The eightieth anniversary of Darwin's evolutionary doctrine has been widely reflected in the Soviet press. This is what the newspaper *Izvestia* wrote on that occasion:

"In 1859 Darwin's book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, appeared. The edition was sold out in England in a single day, and from that day everything in science was changed. Those who only recently had firmly believed in the immutability of plant and animal forms, or stood amazed at the 'eternal' purposefulness of the organic world, or upheld the divine origin of man, received a crushing and cruel blow. Entirely new scientific conceptions had come into being: mutability, natural selection, evolution and, finally, Darwinism."

Darwin's name is exceptionally popular in the Soviet Union. The works of the Soviet scientists, Michurin, Lysenko, Tsitsin and others are a living proof of the fact that man armed with the Darwin theory of mutability of species is able to create forms of life which our planet never knew before. Advanced Soviet agro-biological science shows the immense vistas opening out before Darwinism in the U.S.S.R., where man's freed labor is creating a new life and is constructively changing nature in the interests of man. The Soviet Union has become the second fatherland of Darwinism, owing to daring experimentation combined with profound theoretical research directed toward a further rise in the well-being of the people.

A special session of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. was dedicated to the eightieth anniversary of Darwin's theory of evolution. Academicians, corresponding members of the Academy and scientific workers from various institutes filled the hall to overflowing. A large portrait of the great scientist was mounted on the stage and next to it was a transparence with Joseph Stalin's remarkable words: "In the course of its development science has known many courageous men who knew how to destroy the old and create the new, despite all obstacles, despite everything. Such men of science as Galileo, Darwin and many others, are universally known."

In his introductory address, Academician Orbeli said that during the eighty years which had passed since the publication of the first edition of Darwin's book, the sciences of biology, and particularly of medicine, had progressed magnificently.

The Darwin theory had laid the foundations of comparative pathology of which Ilya Mechnikov was so brilliant a representative. Orbeli also mentioned that new anti-Darwin theories had been appearing in the West; in our Soviet Union, however, the biologists were in full unity with Darwin. Darwinism was penetrating deeper and deeper into the various branches of biology.

Papers were read also by Academicians E. Yaroslavsky, B. Keller, N. Vavilov and T. Lysenko.

The Leningrad journal *Nature* has published a letter by the great naturalist addressed to the Russian Academy of Sciences and hitherto unpublished. In this letter, dated 1867, Darwin conveys his thanks for the honor accorded him in electing him corresponding member of the Academy and for the high appreciation of his scientific work. The journal further publishes details of Darwin's election as a corresponding member of the Russian Academy and the opinions of the outstanding Russian academicians who supported his candidature.

CULTURE COMES TO TURKMENIA

The following notice appeared recently on the last page of one of the Turkmenian newspapers: "The last hundred and sixty-three illiterate collective farmers, men and women, of the Kizyl-Krvat district will have graduated the school for the liquidation of illiteracy among adults by the fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Turkmenian S.S.R."

The collective farms and villages are no longer held in the iron clutches of illiteracy; gone is the Turkmenia of old, the land of benighted ignorance; a land where no more than 0.7 per cent of the people knew how to read and write. How the cultural requirements of the Turkmenian workers have risen is shown by the fact that the works of Cervantes, Gorky, Pushkin, Shakespeare and Hugo have been translated and published in the Turkmenian language. Turkmenian theaters give many national plays, and they also stage plays by Goldoni, Lope de Vega and Molière.

So abject was the slavery of the Turkmenian people under tsarism that they knew no songs nor had they any dances of their own. The *bakhshi*, or wandering minstrels, would visit from time to time the villages lying along the caravan roads and the entire population would then gather to listen to the singers. Everybody but . . . the women. Women were forbidden not only to sing but even to listen to songs, and while the *bakhshi* sang the

A Turkmenian Girl
Painting by P. Radimov

women were not allowed to leave their tents. Today the Republic has eight State theaters and a national ensemble. Among the five hundred *bakhshi* there are dozens of women. At the present time a group of writers and composers is writing the first Turkmenian opera which is soon to be staged. Upward of 1,500 children of farmers and workers study at a special opera studio, at seven music schools and at a dramatic school. Whereas in 1911 the tsarist government appropriated the sum of only 17,000 rubles for elementary education in Turkmenia, in 1924 about 2,500,000 rubles was spent on public education, and by 1939 this item had risen to 226,000,000. During the years of the Stalinist Five-Year Plans 195 new schools were built in the republic, 617 clubs organized and 254 cinemas put in operation.

THE SOVIET CAPITAL

Since the October Socialist Revolution, Moscow has become the greatest industrial and cultural center of the Soviet Union, with a population of more than four million people. Between 1926 and 1938 the population of Moscow has more than doubled. In birth rate Moscow occupies the leading place among the principal cities of the world; compared with 1910, its mortality rate has diminished by one half. In Moscow, as in the rest of the country, the material wellbeing of the

people is rising steadily, as are also the living standards and cultural level of the population. The item of expenditures for cultural and educational purposes has become part and parcel of the budget of a worker's family, these expenditures having increased 274.3 per cent between 1934 and 1938. The network of hospitals, the care for mother and child increase steadily. At present there are as many as 1,542 consultation centers of maternity welfare, nurseries, homes for infants and kindergartens.

Three hundred and fifty new school buildings accommodating 308,000 pupils have been erected in Moscow during the last four years. Approximately 1,000,000 children and adults attend elementary and second-grade schools, factory schools, schools for the illiterate, preparatory courses at universities and technicums and special technical schools; in addition, thousands of people attend Party and trade union courses and circles. Moscow has 719 libraries with a total of nine and a half million volumes, not counting the All-Union Lenin Library which is one of the largest book repositories in the world. The capital of the U.S.S.R. has 58 museums with a total of eight to nine million visitors a year. About 1,000,000 people visit the Moscow Planetarium, and 3,000,000 visitors are registered yearly at the zoo. Eight parks of culture and rest are frequented by 25,000,000 people in the course of the year.

The Moscow theaters are famous the world over. The capital has 40 theaters, 260 clubs and 548 cinemas which are always crowded. Much has been done for the development of mass physical culture: there are 29 stadiums, 31 sports grounds, 54 sports halls, 11 water sport stations and swimming pools, 32 skiing stations, 5 velodromes and 2 riding academies.

The children are surrounded by particular care. An extensive network of institutions for occupying the children's leisure after school hours has been set up. There are 29 children's parks 13 Houses of Pioneers, 9 Houses of Artistic Education for Children, 16 children's technical stations, 9 children's theaters, 2 children's cinemas, 73 children's libraries, 7 children's tourist centers, 22 sports schools and 34 sport grounds.

Moscow has 175 scientific research institutes besides the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., the Lenin Agricultural

D. Pantefel-Nechetzkaya of Sverdlovsk appears at the recent Moscow contest of vaudevile performers. She won the first place among the singers

Academy and others. These employ 9,357 scientific workers and 1,307 post graduates. Another 2,500 people take the post graduate courses in the capital's institutes of higher learning. In Moscow specialists in every branch of knowledge receive their training. The number of students enrolled in the Moscow Academies for the year 1938-39 is 4,500. In the institutes of higher learning the distribution for this year is as follows: building and industrial, 35,000; agricultural, 6,500; transport and communications, 10,200; educational and art, 19,800; medical, 11,900; socio-economic, 6,900 students. In the technical schools the following numbers of students are enrolled: building and industrial, 17,600; transport and communications, 4,200; educational and art, 7,700; medical, 7,300 and socio-economic, 1,100.

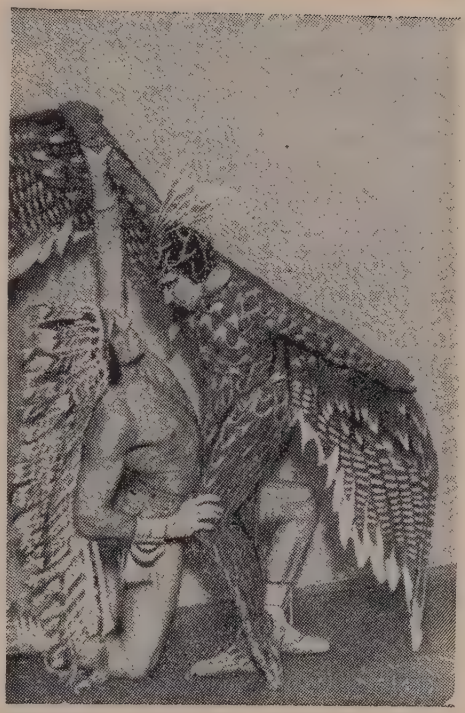
The Soviet capital lives a tense, creative life. Every day sees 1,099,000 children and adults start off for school; 210,000 people visit museums and exhibitions, and 130,000 go to the theaters. About ten million newspaper copies and more than half a million journals are published in Moscow daily. The number of books published daily is one million three hundred thousand.

A THEATER BEYOND THE POLAR CIRCLE

A young city, Naryan-Mar, the capital of the Nenets National District, is growing up far away from Moscow, beyond the Polar Circle. This city is proud of its young theater which has existed only for two years, and yet has succeeded in gaining the affections of thousands of trans-polar inhabitants: Nentsi, reindeer herdsmen, hunters and trappers, fishermen, builders and workers at the sawmills. In the remote Yamalsk tundra, on the Kara and in the Bolshezemelsk tundra people may be heard arguing as to whether the actor N. Stepnoi was better in Gorky's *Yegor Bulychev* or in Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters.*

During the two years of its activity the theater has staged more than two hundred plays which were witnessed by 45,000 spectators. During the last year twenty-five matinee performances for children were given to audiences totaling 7,000 young theatergoers. The Moscow newspaper *Pravda* quotes the words of a collective farmer, Savatty Khatanzeisky: "Look how many plays our herdsmen have already seen: plays by Ostrovsky, Gogol and Gorky. Sometimes the acting is so good that one feels like rushing onto the stage and hugging all the actors, only that one's afraid it would not be the proper thing to do.

"I look at the stage and life opens up



The Bird of Prey — a dance by two participants of the vaudevile contest, V. Sergeyeva and A. Taskin (Leningrad)

before me as I watch how the people lived under the tsars. Was there really such a woman as Katerina? (The heroine of Ostrovsky's play *Thunderstorm.*) You say there were many like her? That's what I thought. What a life we lived before! We were not even supposed to love! All this I understand now, ever since the Soviet power has sent teachers, theaters and cinemas into the tundra."

The first drama dealing with the Nenets people is now under rehearsal. The play will deal with Voul Piettomin, who led the uprising against Russian autocracy.

A circle of native amateur dancers has been organized by the theater.

SOVIET MUSIC FESTIVAL

The third festival of Soviet music was received with great enthusiasm in the principal cities of the Soviet Union, more than one hundred symphonic and chamber music concerts being given in Moscow alone. The best performers and soloists participated in the performances in Leningrad, Minsk, Archangel and other cities. Every generation of Soviet composers, from the

mature masters to the youthful composers, every tendency and form of music was represented on the programs.

The majority of this year's novelties consisted of symphonies, most of which were of a thematic nature. Such, for instance, is the cantata dedicated to J. V. Stalin by the Ukrainian composer B. Lyatoshinsky (words by the poet M. Rylsky).

Interesting among the novelties performed during the festival is D. Shostakovich's *Sixth Symphony*, a symphony by A. Veprik, a pianoforte concerto by B. Shekhter, a concerto for violin by Z. Feldman, a harp concerto by Mosolov, and a *Romantic Poem* for violin by V. Zhelobinsky. The center of attention were the symphonies which had already won well-deserved places in our concert repertories; *viz.*, the symphony and violin concerto by N. Myaskovsky, Shostakovich's *First* and *Fifth Symphonies*, compositions by S. Prokofieff, M. Steinberg, A. Khachaturyan, V. Muradeli, L. Knipper, D. Kabalevsky, G. Sviridov and others. Great interest was evoked by Prokofieff's cantata *Alexander Nevsky*, and L. Knipper's *Seventh Symphony*.

At the Leningrad festival were played for the first time some fragments from the opera *Monna Mariana*, written by the young composer Y. Levitan on themes from Gorky's Italian fairy tales, also some new pieces of Soviet monumental music. Under the baton of Mravinsky, the laureate of the all-Union conductors' competition, the Philharmonic orchestra played Shcherbakov's suite *Peter I*, the *Romantic Poem* for violin and orchestra by Zhelobinsky and Shostakovich's *Sixth Symphony*.

Kabalevsky's *Symphony No. 2* had its premiere in Minsk and was heard with great interest. This symphony is delightful for its sincerity and emotionality, and its organic and musical development. Its rendering by the orchestra was delicately expressive.

Great interest was aroused by a piece by the able young Byelorussian composer, A. Bogatyrev—a fairy poem about a mother bear, for chorus, soloists and symphonic orchestra.

The annual Soviet music festivals have become a tradition and they undoubtedly help in consolidating the achievements and in raising the level of musical culture in the Soviet Union.

"NIGHTINGALE," THE FIRST BYELORUSSIAN BALLET

The Minsk State Theater for Opera and Ballet gave the premiere of *Nightingale*, the first Byelorussian ballet. The scenario was written by Y. Slonimsky and A. Ermolayev, after a story of the same title, by Z. Byaduli.

It shows the oppression of the Byelorussian people by the Polish nobility and the struggles of Simon, a peasant, nicknamed Nightingale for his musical ability. There are two themes in the ballet: one, Simon's love for Zoska, and the other, the oppression of the helpless peasants by the Polish magnate, followed by a spontaneous outburst of class hatred against the oppressors.

A well-written libretto, though not without its shortcomings, and good dance music based, in the main, on popular folklore, combined to give a colorful performance.

Both composer and performers made extensive use of Byelorussian folklore for the music and dances. In addition to modern popular dances they have also introduced little-known old country dances. The new dance music, written by M. Kroshner, is based on popular songs and customs. Such is the "Dance of the Old Folks," "The Pillow," and others. In M. Kroshner's great symphonic picture, the praises are sung of nature, love and life. In the diaphonous musical pattern there stands out in bold relief the immense happiness of youth and spring and love.

The press hails the *Nightingale* as an outstanding event in Byelorussian art, a testimony to the successful development of Soviet choreographic art.

"THE MIGHTY TORRENT"

A new documentary film, *The Mighty Torrent*, dealing with the construction of the Great Ferghana Canal, has been released by the Moscow and Tashkent cinema studios. As is known, a canal of great economic importance 270 kilometers long has been built in the Ferghana Valley, on the initiative and by the labor enthusiasm of the Uzbekistan collective farmers.

. . . A boundless desert. Dried up ditches and rivulets, ruins of a village. No water anywhere, no trace of life. Sand, nothing but sand, as far as the eye is able to reach.

From time immemorial the Uzbek people dreamt of water, but the water belonged to the *khans*, *bais* and priests. And due to lack of water the fields lay waste and the people used to leave their homes to wander out to the mountains.

Only the Soviet power gave water to the people. A panorama of the rich collective farms of the Ferghana Valley, of flourishing cotton plantations and orchards opened before the audience, but the problem of water was not yet completely solved, and the dream of irrigating the Ferghana Valley continued to agitate the people's minds.

. . . The construction of the canal was begun, and a mighty torrent of men started moving to their assigned places on the eve of the first day of building (August 1). Among them were the best people of the Uzbek collective farms, including engineers, technicians. Great crowds of people line the roads and welcome the builders, holding out gifts of melons and water melons, as a token of their affection and attention. This episode in the film leaves a strong impression.

The film tells of the great cultural and educational activities conducted on the construction works. The six weeks spent on the canal were a school of Communist education for many of its builders. Much political work was done there by the three thousand propagandists; actors, singers, and musicians gave performances daily for the collective farmers.

The film shows the builders of the canal meeting the best representatives of Uzbek art—Khalima Nasyrova, Tamara Khanum and the actors of the Uzbek State opera and ballet who stage the new Uzbek opera, *The Snowstorm*, for the canal builders.

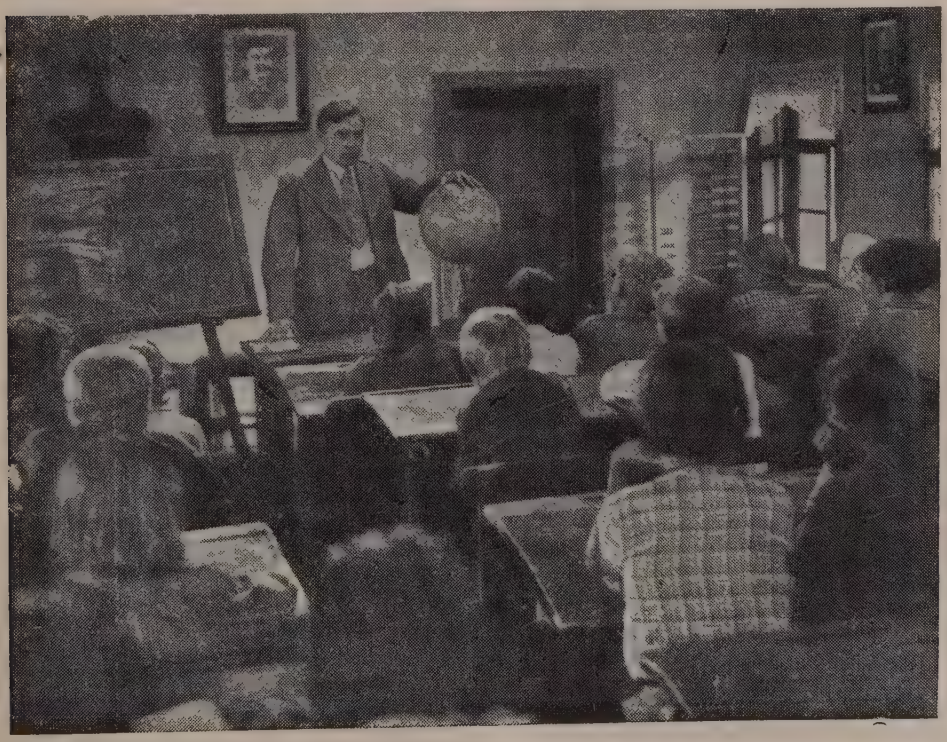
Toward the end of the film the audience is shown the canal viewed from a plane; an endless ribbon of water traversing the Ferghana Valley. The water surges forward from under the dam, rushing through the canal and flooding the parched, cracked earth.

Pravda says that the authors and regisseurs of *The Mighty Torrent*, L. Varlamov and V. Nebylitsky, in association with operator M. Kayumov and composer Vano Muradeli, have created a film that is followed with unflagging interest from beginning to end. The majestic deed of heroism accomplished by the people has been immortalized truthfully and with simplicity.

"THE SCHOOLMASTER"

The Lenfilm Studio has produced a new film, *The Schoolmaster*, staged by regisseur Sergei Gerasimov. It shows the daily life of a collective farm and its people.

A few years before the action of the play opens, Stepan Lautin had been sent by his collective farm to the city, to study. He has now returned home, eager to be of service to his native village, as schoolmaster. This homecoming is regarded by Stepan's father as a sort of confession of his son's failure in life. "Since the lad



A still from "The Schoolmaster". B. Chirkov in the role of the schoolmaster

had to return home," the old man argues, "he was probably unable to rise in the world, to achieve something better, and is, evidently, a failure."

This lack of understanding of the State importance of the village schoolmaster is one of the well-caught and cleverly developed points of the film. By all his work, by the varied activities of a reformer of life, Stepan proves the correctness of his decision. He comes to be recognized as an authority by the collective farmers and they elect him as their deputy to the Supreme Soviet. He is a teacher of life in the best and noblest meaning of the word.

The film devotes comparatively little space, only two scenes, to Stepan's activities as teacher, *viz.*, the "first lesson" and the "examination." But they are staged and acted in so masterly and convincing a way that they seem to reveal all the wide scope of the great and useful work of a country schoolmaster.

The newspaper *Izvestia* writes of the film as follows:

"*The Schoolmaster* is a truthful and talented tale of the collective farm village and the progress of its people; a tale of love, of truly human love. And it is told by Sergei Gerasimov lovingly, with the true inspiration of a great artist. The significance of this film extends far beyond the boundaries of cinematography."

NEW FILMS

The Kiev cinema studio has started to work on a new film, *The Fifth Ocean*, after the scenario by A. Speshnev and A. Filimonov. It is being staged by regisseur Isidor Annensky, known for his famous Chekhov films *The Bear* and *The Man in a Case*.

The filming of *Fatherland* is now finished. The film has been produced at the Tbilisi studio after the scenario of the playwright G. Mdivani. The producer and regisseur is Honored Artist Nikolai Shengelaya; the theme is Soviet patriotism. It shows the leading people on the Georgian collective farms, working their tangerine and tea plantations. The pictures were taken in the beautiful scenes of Ajaria and in the mountains of southern Ossetia.

WORKS BY PALEKH ARTISTS EXHIBITED

In 1924 a small body of artists was organized in Moscow which later became known under the name of the Palekh Society of Artists. They soon became famous in the Soviet Union and beyond its borders for their little caskets of papier-maché beautifully lacquered and ornamented with the finest miniature designs, brilliant in color and perfect in composition.

The growth of Palekh art was greatly stimulated by the painters' turning for their subjects to the images created by literature, especially to Pushkin, Gorky, Nekrasov, and some of the Soviet writers. Episodes from the glorious Civil War, the heroic Red Army which protects the borders of the Land of Soviets, collective farm life, the happy childhood of Soviet children, the conquest of the Arctic, the Stalinist Constitution—all furnish themes for their creative art.

Some highly talented artists have come to the fore who have done away with the hackneyed clichés which predominated in the Palekh style before the Revolution. We now have such outstanding masters as I. Golikov, I. Bakanov, I. Markevich, A. Kotukhin, I. Vakurov, and others. Of the younger masters there are P. Bazhenov, F. Kaurtsev and G. Bureyev.

As time went on the Palekh masters were no longer satisfied with doing their miniatures only on papier-maché. They began to experiment in other directions and have been successful as illustrators of books.

The mural paintings of two of the halls of the Leningrad Palace of Pioneers, which opened in 1937, were their first considerable piece of work in monumental painting. It was a great success and since then the Palekh masters are being invited to do mural paintings in various places.

Of considerable interest is the work of the Palekh artists for the theater (the setting of the *Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Champions* in the Rybinsk theater) and for the cinema (colored multiplication film the *Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish*). In this work P. Bazhenov stands out prominent with his colorful fantastic sketches of scenery, costumes and makeup.

The exhibition of works by Palekh painters recently held in Moscow aroused general interest. The numerous exhibits demonstrated the road traveled by this body of artists who have arisen from the midst of the people. There the visitors saw works that have become history in Soviet art, as for instance the original illustrations to Golikov's *Tale of Igor's Regiment* and several artistic compositions on caskets by I. Bakanov, D. Butorin and others.

Many interesting caskets were fashioned by the Palekh artists especially for the exhibition. There is A. Kotukhin's, for example, with pictures of Pushkin's fairy tales which synthetize the great work previously done by this artist in the pictor-

ial interpretation of the poet's fairy stories.

Among works based on historical themes is N. Zinovyev's miniature *The Storming of Izmail*. Some of the pictures bear on the history of the struggles of the Russian people with the Polish intervention early in the seventeenth century. Historical-revolutionary themes were shown in the two works connected with the names of Frunze and Kirov.

Side by side with masterpieces of the older masters, the exhibition showed the achievements of the young graduates of the Palekh School of Art.

CULTURAL LIFE IN WESTERN DISTRICTS OF BYELORUSSIA AND UKRAINE

During the two months which have passed since Western Byelorussia was merged into the Byelorussian S.S.R., 371 new schools with instruction in Russian and Byelorussian have been opened in the Belostok region. The number of pupils has increased by 5,000. About 1,000 teachers, formerly unemployed, have been given jobs. Eleven evening schools for adults who are desirous of learning to read and to write were opened in the Grodno district.

A competition lasting three days was held in Belostok for the selection of musicians, singers and dancers for the theater, philharmonic and variety stage in Byelorussia. About two hundred people took part in the competition, in the course of which many talented people were discovered. Forty-two are being sent to Minsk to perform in the theaters and concert halls there. The rest will be employed in local theaters and dramatic and musical companies.

For the first time, a ballet for children, *Snowy Night Fairy Tale*, was given in the Belostok theater. Youthful Belostok school girls gave an enthusiastic performance of the ballet.

Under the Polish authorities, Bekker, the author of the ballet, was unable to arrange the necessary dancing lessons as no funds were forthcoming for the purpose. Many of the parents would not permit their children to go in for dancing, considering ballet art "not quite decent for children."

Bekker found it very hard to arrange new performances. She was everything—balletmaster and artist, painter of the scenery and designer of costumes. When a performance was ready to be given the question arose of ways and means of showing it. Tickets had to be offered to the rich at their homes. The money for renting the premises, for taxes and all kinds of dues, had to be paid by the person who had organized the performance, and when few tickets were sold, she, Bekker, was so much out of pocket over the experiment.

At present Bekker has been given a steady job by the Bureau of People's Education of Soviet Belostok.

Only a few small theatrical groups existed in Belostok prior to the coming of the Red Army. Many able musicians, singers, dancers and actors were unable to make use of their talents and dragged on a miserable existence.

At present a Polish theater has been founded under the direction of the efficient regisseur Vengerko. There has also been organized a Russian and a Jewish theater, a variety theater, a jazz orchestra of thirty members, and a symphony orchestra of fifty, under the able young conductor Shaevitz.

A Byelorussian theater is under organization, and work is also going on on the training of a Byelorussian chorus by Shirman, the popular conductor. He made a tour of Western Byelorussia selecting singers from among workers, peasants and intellectuals who wished to join his ensemble.

A music school with classes for piano and violin is opening in Belostok. Seven hundred and fifty applications have already been received from people wishing to study music.

A symphony orchestra has been formed by the Borislav oil workers. It is composed of twenty-five musicians, among whom are a driller, a tinsmith, a student, and others.

The first performance was given before an audience numbering two thousand, and consisting of workers, engineers and technicians and their families. On the program were Chaikovsky's waltz from the ballet *Sleeping Beauty*, the Fantasia from *Queen of Spades*, Ippolitov's *Caucasian Suite* and other items, all of which were heartily applauded by the audience.

The orchestra will go on a concert tour over the surrounding countryside and oil works region.

NOTES

The construction of a large new cinema studio has been completed in Kiev.

An exhibition of works by young artists has been opened in Krasnodar. Two hundred and thirty-seven paintings, sketches and drawings are exhibited.

An exhibition of works by artists from among Red Army men and commanders opened at Rostov-on-Don.

A rare edition of Horace was discovered in the city of Gorky. The book was published in Venice in 1472.

To perpetuate the memory of the talented actor, Boris Shchukin, who died last year, the Moscow Soviet has renamed the street where the actor lived Shchukin Street.

Complying with the will of the late Honored Master of Art, Isaac Brodsky, his family have presented to the State his collection of paintings and drawings by Russian painters. Brodsky's collection is a very fine one consisting of 184 oil paintings, 91 water colors and 266 drawings by Repin, Surikov, Levitan, Aivazovsky and many other famous masters.

SOUTH AMERICA

A book entitled *The History of the Brazilian Theater* has been published in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian capital. Written by Lafayette Silava, the Brazilian theatrical critic, it was awarded a prize by the Commission of the National Theater. It treats in detail of the history of the Brazilian theater, acquaints the reader with its repertory and tells of Brazilian playwrights, theatrical companies and famous actors. The Brazilian critics consider this book to be a most valuable and complete treatise on the Brazilian theater.

Great satisfaction was expressed in Argentine literary circles on the occasion of the award of the national prize for literature to Juan Pablo Echague and Eduardo Malea. The first prize of twenty thousand pesos was awarded to Echague, a talented young literary and theatrical critic and novelist. The book that gained him the prize is *Where the Sonda Flows From*, a collection of "Provincial Tales." Like his previous book, *Three Pictures of My Fatherland*, it found great favor with Argentine readers. The journal *Nosotros* writes:

"It is safe to say that it is not Echague's latest book only, but also most of the other works of fiction and criticism of this, the most talented of Argentine writers, that are deserving of the prize."

The recipient of the second prize was Eduardo Malea, a novelist and essay writer. He came into the limelight for the first time in 1926 with his book *Stories for a Disconsolate English Lady*. His next book, *European Nocturne*, received the "Buenos Aires premium for the best work in prose." His two books *A City on the Dead River* and *The History of a Love*, published in 1936 and 1937, were, in the words of the critics, "permeated with deep optimism and love for mankind."

The premium of the Losada Publishers and the Autorjus Literary Agency was awarded to Ricardo Guiraldes, Argentine's greatest writer. His prize-winning novel will be published in Spanish by the Losada Publishers in Buenos Aires and will also

The famous Soviet artist Nikolai Cherkassov among Belostok schoolchildren

appear in different countries in the French, English, Italian, Dutch and Hungarian languages.

Some years ago, in the Chilean city of Viña del Mar, situated on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, a municipal club was founded, which was intended to acquaint foreign tourists with the achievements of Chilean culture. At present the club has become a true center of culture; attached to it is a permanent exhibition of paintings and sculpture with a special commission of outstanding Chilean artists to select suitable exhibits. The best artists and sculptors send their work to the club. Of late not only Chilean artists, but Peruvian, Columbian, Bolivian and Argentinian as well take part in the exhibition.

The club popularizes Chilean folk music and holds yearly competitions in national music, which have attracted the attention of musical circles in Chile. As a result of the club's activity many prominent musicians are including in their program works of Chilean composers and pieces of Chilean folk music. A free school of music has been opened under the club, directed by the well-known Chilean composer Domingo Moreno.

The club has also organized a school of art attended by numbers of young people from every corner of the country. This free school has two departments: one of art, and the other of applied art. The pupils are taught painting, drawing, sculpture, artistic embroidery, engraving and painting on cloth.

The club arranges yearly competitions for beginning writers and helps them to get in touch with editors and publishing houses; there is an excellent library containing several thousand volumes in many languages. A special section of the club is engaged in "disseminating theatrical and musical culture among the masses." Owing to the cooperation of the club, the Comedy Theater, one of the best in the city, gives free performances which attract numerous spectators from the city and its surroundings.

LITHUANIA

THE LATEST IN LITHUANIAN LITERATURE

There are two basic trends in Lithuanian bourgeois literature. The first realistically reflects the life of the poorest classes of the city and rural inhabitants, and the best known representatives of this trend are E. Biliunas, Lazdinua Peleda, and others. The second trend may be called "National Romanticism." Its representatives, such as V. Kreve, E. Maironis, L. Gira, and others, dedicate their works to the historical past of Lithuania.

However, some of the writers of this group, faced by grim reality of prevailing conditions, became disillusioned in their former ideals and began to react differently to their surroundings. For instance the poet Maironis laments:

I sang glory to hope, how sweet was the refrain. . . .
Now one must be silent, or speak with hate of these degenerates.

This spirit pervades the satirical poem *Ashes* by F. Kirsha.

The literary group, "Ketury Veiai" (The Four Winds), which was organized in 1923, ought to be mentioned. Although it was soon disbanded, it is important because out of it grew two new trends: one, petty bourgeois, cultivating symbolism and sentimental romanticism, trying to paint reality in a rosy light. Its chief representatives are the poets B. Putinas, P. Vaiyanas and prose writers Chvaitas, K. Itzura and others. Poets of the second trend—the progressive group—created the magazine *Trechas Frontas* (*The Third Front*). This magazine was banned in 1931, but it served as a good school for young progressive writers. Out of this group sprung such prominent writers as A. Wenslow, P. Zvirka, Salomea Neris, and others.

Of the most important recent works by Lithuanian writers one should mention the following: E. Grushas, a Catholic writer who formerly idealized the life of the middle class, but later wrote a long novel, *Careerists*, in which he unmasks the leaders of reaction. The novel *Daubishes Inteligentai* (*Intellectuals of Daubishes*) by the woman writer Orintaite also deals with this theme, which forms the basis of the poem *Dichus*, by Tilmitis.

P. Zvirka is the author of *Mother Earth*, a novel which created a big sensation. It describes the hard lot of the poor peasantry.

The novel by E. Martsinkevichus *Benjamin Kordushal*, written in 1937, also depicts the process of ruin and impoverishment of the small farmers who are exploited by the "kulaks."

The most prominent writer of the older generation, V. Kreve, who formerly idealized the feudal past of Lithuania, has now passed over to contemporary subjects. He has gathered about him a whole group of young writers. Another writer of the older generation, Lutas Gira, who edits the magazine *Literary News*, also writes on current events. The issue that was dedicated to Soviet culture and Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. scored a big success among the progressive reading circles of Lithuania.

About Our Contributors

RUVIM FRAYERMAN. A talented young Soviet novelist and short story writer. He first attracted attention of the Soviet reader with his *Vasska, Red Partisan,* a novel about the revolutionary youth of Manchuria (see *International Literature* No. 2, 1933). *Early Love,* published in this issue, is his second major work. Frayerman's novels and stories are distinguished by their soft lyricism and fine psychological analysis.

PETRAS ZVIRKA. An outstanding contemporary Lithuanian writer. *The Frontier* was given to us by the author during his sojourn in the U.S.S.R. in the summer of 1939.

LEV NIKULIN. Well-known Soviet writer, author of a series of prose works, plays and important articles on topics of the day. Nikulin has been very active in Soviet literature since the first days of the October Revolution.

LYUDMIL STOYANOV. Progressive Bulgarian writer. Author of a number of novels, some of them have been translated into Russian.

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