

character, calling up the vision of a Greek temple.

I stopped writing for a little, to watch the sunset. The sun has quite disappeared behind the buildings opposite. High in the heavens, myriads of cloudlets have assembled from somewhere; their edges have a silvery sheen; whilst the rest is of a delicate grey tint; the whole troop of them is moving northward. There was so much sublime indifference, so much smiling unconcern, about the cloud procession, that I could not but smile in my turn, and follow as I always do the rhythm of envioning life. How, when there was such a sky to look at, could one possibly be ill-humored or petty? If you will only remember to keep your eyes open, you will be able to be "good" without fail.

I am rather surprised that Karl wants you to send him a book on bird song. For me the song of the birds is inseparable from their life as a whole; it is the whole that interests me, rather than any detached detail. Send him a well-written book on the distribution of animals, for I am sure that will interest him. I do hope you will be able to visit me soon. Send a wire directly you get permission.

Much love,

Your Rosa

Lord ha' mercy on me! I've filled eight pages writing to you! Let it go at that. Thanks for the books.

Breslau, Mid-November, 1917.

My beloved Sonichka,

I hope soon to have a chance of sending you this letter at long last, so I hasten to take up my pen. For how long a time I have been forced to forbear my habit of talking to you—on paper at least. I am allowed to write so few letters, and I had to save up my chances for Hans D.²³ who was expecting to hear from me. But now all is over. My last two letters to him were addressed to a dead man, and one has already been returned to me. His loss still seems incredible. But enough of this. I prefer to consider such matters in solitude. It only annoys me beyond expression when people try, as N. tried, "to break the news" to me, and to make a parade of their own grief by way of "consolation." Why should my closest friends understand me so

little and hold me so cheaply as to be unable to realise that the best way in such cases is to say quickly, briefly, and simply: "He is dead"?

... How I deplore the loss of all these months and years in which we might have had so many joyful hours together, notwithstanding all the horrors that are going on throughout the world. Do you know, Sonichka, the longer it lasts, and the more the infamy and monstrosity of the daily happenings surpasses all bounds, the more tranquil and more confident becomes my personal outlook. I say to myself that it is absurd to apply moral standards to the great elemental forces that manifest themselves in a hurricane, a flood, or an eclipse of the sun. We have to accept them simply as data for investigation, as subjects of study.

Manifestly, objectively considered, these are the only possible lines along which history can move, and we must follow the movement without losing sight of the main trend. I have the feeling that all this moral filth through which we are wading, this huge madhouse in which we live, may all of a sudden, between one day and the next, be transformed into its very opposite, as if by the stroke of a magician's wand; may become something stupendously great and heroic; *must* inevitable be so transformed, if only the war lasts a few years longer... Read Anatole France's²⁴ *Les dieux ont soif*²⁵. My main reason for admiring this work so much is because the author, with the insight of genius into all that is universally human, seems to say to us: "Behold, out of these petty personalities, out of these trivial commonplaces, arise, when the hour is ripe, the most titanic events and the most monumental gestures of history." We have to take everything as it comes both in social life and in private life; to accept what happens, tranquilly, comprehensively, and with a smile. I feel absolutely convinced that things will take the right turn when the war ends, or not long afterwards; but obviously we have first to pass through a period of terrible human suffering.

What I have just written reminds me of an incident I wish to tell you of, for it seems to me so poetical and so touching. I was recently reading a scientific work upon the migrations of birds, a phe-