

VSEVOLOD GARSHIN

THE SCARLET FLOWER

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"I took notice of you the moment you appeared in literature. Yours was undoubtedly an original talent. . . . Every ageing writer, who sincerely loves his calling, is glad to discover that he has successors: you are one of them."

IVAN TURGENEV

Garshin was born in 1853. He came from a noble impoverished old family, and received his education at the Mining Institute. When the Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1877 he joined up as a volunteer.

Garshin's first story "Four Days" was written in hospital after he was wounded. A passionate denunciation of war's senseless cruelties, it was published in the progressive magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* edited by Saltykov-Shchedrin. It made Garshin's name, and drew appreciative comments on the young author from I. Turgenev and L. Tolstoi.

"The Scarlet Flower," "Four Days," and "Attalea Princeps," included in the present volume, are the best of Garshin's stories. The "Scarlet Flower" is rightly considered to be the gem of his creation. This story about a scarlet poppy and the crazed hero who entered into single combat with all the world's evil is told with real affection and a profound knowledge of the human heart. This story is dedicated to I. Turgenev, the great Russian writer, who was the friend and teacher of Garshin.

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