

ted his image from the attempt of the French to blow up his gate with gunpowder. All such petty miracles are credible enough in face of the one great and undeniable miracle of the existence of so much beauty upon earth.

VII.

Education spoils the Russian as it spoils everybody. The Tretyakoff gallery is sufficient evidence. There appears no true original strain of Russian art. The whole gallery is so imitative that every picture in it might have been painted by Gerald Kelly. And unfortunately there are only one or two who mimic anything so high as Reynolds or Gainsborough; the principal influences are rather those of Frith, Luke Fildes, and others of the sentimental photograph school. The pictures of Peroff, Makowsky, Kramskoi, Gay and Repine are oleographs more oleographic than all previous oleographs. Verestchagin has been well called the despair of photographers; he had astonishingly normal perception, and a facility of draughtsmanship and color which implies a mastery in which nothing was lacking but individuality. He fills some ten pages of the catalogue with 235 oil paintings, many of them conceived on the most generous scale. The man must have had a far greater capacity for painting than I have for looking at his pictures. A mosque-door, life-size, with the minute carvings reproduced so that the texts are as legible as the original, figures again and again in these vast canvases. The painter never seems to have grasped the first fundamentals of painting. In this gallery the fact that representation of nature has no connection with art is driven home, and one almost begins to sympathize with the Futurist manifesto.

The only insight beyond that of Bonnat, Bougereau, Carolus-Duran, and their bovine kind is shown by Shishkin, Sudhowsky, Prvokline, Mestchersky, Dubovsky, Nesteroff, and Kuindjy, until we come to recent years, when the accessibility of Paris has given an entirely new direction to Russian art, and the Latin quarter has warned Russian students that they must be original. Paris has become the sole centre of art, and so destroyed all national characteristics! (I noticed exactly the same tendencies in the gallery of Stockholm.) The slavish imitation that marked all nineteenth century work, even more than eighteenth century, is gone, and the future appears more hopeful than that of art in any other country.

But the past must be closed; the Tretyakoff gallery is only "an average Academy," except for the room which is consecrated to foreign art, and holds the best Gauguin, the best Van Gogh, and the best Toulouse-Lautrec that one is likely to see between Vladivostok and the studio of Roderic O'Connor in the Rue du Cherche-Midi — where it is always Quatorze Heures!

VIII.

But of all these matters it is idle and impertinent to write. Analysis shows "King Lear" to be a jumble of twenty-six very commonplace letters, repeated without any regard to symmetry or any other rule for assembling the same. This appalling café-concert (where of the thirty items barely three are tolerable) does not hinder my appreciation of the Shashlik which my bold Circassian in his brown rough robe with the silver furniture will presently bring me on a skewer. The concert comes to an end; the banality of bad orchestra, bad singing

and bad dancing of bad women, inaudible through the clatter of innumerable forks on plates and tongues in jaws, is dead before it is alive; this is not Moscow, or even an impression of it. The lady in black silk (on my right) with "sapphire" oblongs about 2¼ inches by 2½ inches in her ears reminds me delightfully of the cold sucking-pig of the Slaviansky Bazaar. Life cancels life; death is the only positive, perhaps because it has the air of being the only negative.

Moscow is the bezel of a poison-ring: about it is only the gold and silver of the stars and of the steppes, a ring whose equation is the incommensurable.

I can take ship in my imagination, and arrive at marvellous heavens; I can conjure monsters from the deep of mind; nothing so strange and so real has found the mouth of the sunrise on its russet silken sails, or hailed my bark from the far shore of Oceanus or Phlegethon. Chimaera, Medusa, Echidna, and those others that we dare not name, is it you or your incarnations that come, incubus and succubus, unmasked into the dream which we call Moscow? Why is the essence of the unsubstantial fixed in stone, the land of utmost faery paved with cobbles, the grossest vices transfigured with a film of moonlight, the blood of unnameable crimes become of equal virtue with the blood of martyrs? Why is the face in the ikon so dark, if not for the face of Ivan the Terrible as he gazed sneering on the face of his own son, struck down by his own hand? Blood on the snow, and starlight on the cupolas! The Strelitzes headless before St. Basil's, and the sun setting ablaze those pinnacles of lust erect! The city washed in fire, and the conqueror of Europe flying before his army from the advance-guard of Field-Marshal Boreas! Heroism and murder hand in hand, devotion and treachery mingling furtive kisses under the walls of the Kremlin!

What ghosts lurk in the shadows of the garden of Pan find playmates in those of the garden of Alexander III. All this is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent as That Great Name itself; all this is prophesied eternally and infallibly as I step from the ignis fatuus concert-hall to the garden, where columns, crescents, trees, and fountains are alike ablaze with ultra-violet — unearthly as only one other sight that I have seen, the ashen horror of eclipse, — the miracle of summer dawn in Moscow!

"LOVE LIES BLEEDING."

Curled on itself for love of its own mould,

The siren shell lies open to the globe

Of Godhead that rays forth with purple probe

Light of fierce force, a galaxy of gold;

And by the spell whereon his fingers fold

The murex blood beams oozing from the lobe

Whose delicate blushes modestly disrobe

The virgin Venus that her nymphs uphold!

The sand is still like star-dust in my hair;

The sea is still like slumber in my brain;

The sun still burns my face — and on the air

(While in the Rose and crimson Thorn makes merry)

Come nightingales — and bells — and through their strain

The vision of the towers of Glastonbury!