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RUSSIA.  
DESCRIPTIVE AND ILLUSTRATIVE.







# RUSSIA

The Nevsky Prospect, St. Petersburg



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# RUSSIA

BY

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

AUTHOR OF "ITALY," "CONSTANTINOPLE," "THE ORIENT," ETC.

AND BY

OTHER DISTINGUISHED FRENCH TRAVELERS AND  
WRITERS OF NOTE

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, WITH AN  
ADDITIONAL CHAPTER UPON THE STRUGGLE  
FOR SUPREMACY IN THE FAR EAST*

BY

FLORENCE MACINTYRE TYSON

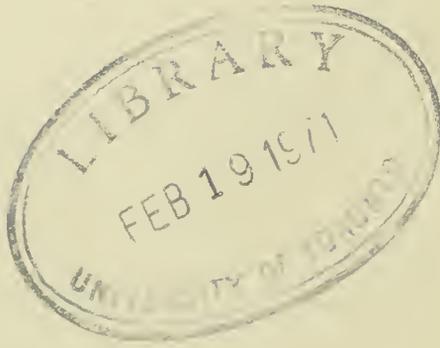
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IN TWO VOLUMES

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ON THE WAY.



# RUSSIA.

## DESCRIPTIVE AND ILLUSTRATIVE.

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### RUSSIA IN WINTER.

#### I.

##### ON THE WAY.

By the time we had come to a full realization that we had indeed started, France was left far behind. We will say nothing of the country crossed in the nocturnal flight of our modern winged-horse.

Here we are at Deutz, on the other side of the Rhine, watching from its bridge of boats the profile of Cologne, made so familiar by the boxes of Jean-Marie Farina, silhouetted against the glowing sunset sky. At six to-morrow, we will be in Berlin—yesterday, as they were lighting the lamps, we were in Paris, though there is nothing very surprising in that in this wonderful century of ours.

The train flies between carefully cultivated fields, illumined with the radiance of the setting orb of day. Soon night comes and with it sleep. At the stations, which are quite far apart, German voices call out German names, in accents that

effectually prevent us from recognizing them in our guide books. Magnificent stations, brilliantly lighted, flash out, only to disappear in the darkness.

We have passed Hanover, Minden; the train still rolls on and the dawn is upon us. On each side stretch great plains of peat, over which the morning mists produce the most singular effects of mirage. We seem to be on a road that crosses the middle of an immense lake, whose waters roll in transparent wavelets to the banks of the rampart. Here and there a cluster of trees, a cottage, emerge like islands to complete the illusion, for it was only that. A sheet of blue mist, floating a few feet above the ground, touched lightly from above by the rays of the rising sun, produced this aquatic phantasmagoria, which resembled the "Fata Morgana" of Sicily. Our geographical knowledge protested in vain against this interior sea, that no map of Prussia ever shows. Our eyes refused to confess themselves deceived and later, when the day, grown older, had dried up these imaginary waters, they looked about in vain for some sort of a boat to substantiate their position.

Suddenly on the left are massed the trees of a great Park; Tritons and Nereids appear as if bathing in the basins; a dome and a circle of columns rising above great buildings. It is Potsdam.

In spite of the rapidity of the train, we catch a glimpse of a sentimental couple wandering down

a deserted avenue of the garden. The lover will have a fine opportunity of comparing his sweetheart to Aurora, and doubtless he was reciting a sonnet on the charms of early rising.

In a few minutes we were in Berlin, and a cab had deposited us at the Hotel de Russie.

One of the greatest pleasures of a traveler is this first drive through an unknown city, which destroys or realizes the picture his fancy had painted of it. The differences of form, the characteristic peculiarities and varying architecture, seize the eye unaccustomed as yet to novel impressions and ready to note them with eagerness.

Our idea of Berlin had been taken in great part from the fantastic stories of Hoffmann. It was a strange and bizarre Berlin, peopled with aulic councilors, men in rich sables, with Kreislers, archivist Lindursts, students like Anselm which, amid clouds of tobacco smoke, had taken form within our brain. And instead there rose before us a regular city, grandiose in aspect, with broad streets and great promenades, superb edifices, half-English, half-German, marked with the seal of the most recent modernity. As we passed, we glanced curiously into those cellars, whose steps were so slippery and well-scoured, that it seemed a break-neck piece of hardihood to step upon them, to see if we might catch a glimpse of Hoffmann himself seated on a hogshead, his feet crossed over the gigantic bowl of his pipe, in the midst of grotesque

scrawls, as his picture in his "Stories," translated by Loewe-Weymar, represents him. But there was nothing in the least like it in these subterranean shops, which their owners were beginning to open. The cats, far from rolling their phosphorescent eyeballs, like "Pussy Murr," presented a most benevolent appearance, seeming quite incapable of either writing their memoirs or tearing with their claws a score of Richard Wagner.

It is impossible to find a city less fantastic than Berlin, and it would require a vast amount of delirious poetry to lodge phantoms in a town so clear, so straight, so correct, where the bats of hallucination would find it indeed difficult to discover a corner in which to conceal themselves. These great, beautiful houses, which could be readily taken for palaces, if one may judge from their columns, their frontals, their architraves, are generally built of brick, for stone is apparently scarce in Berlin. But the bricks are covered with cement or colored plaster made to simulate cut stone: false joints indicate the fictitious layers, and the illusion would be complete, were it not that the frosts of winter, detaching the plaster, discover patches of the red bricks underneath. The necessity of painting the entire façade, to mask the nature of the materials used, gives a highly decorative effect to the buildings when seen in full daylight. The prominent parts, such as the mouldings, cornices, entablatures and consoles are of wood or cast-iron.

to which suitable forms have been given, and when not seen too close, the effect is excellent. To all this splendor there is lacking nothing but—sincerity. In London the porticoes and columns of the palaces bordering each side of Regent's Park are also of brick covered with a layer of plaster, and then painted to look like stone or marble. Why should they not be built simply of brick, whose warm tone and shape are capable of furnishing a thousand delightful devices? In Berlin we saw some houses treated in this way that were absolutely charming, with the added advantage of being TRUE. A make-believe material always inspires a sort of distrust.

The Hotel de Russie is capitally situated, so we will make its broad steps our first point of departure, which will give us a tolerable idea of the general character of Berlin.

The foreground is a quay bordering the Spree. A few ships, with slender masts, sleep on its brown waters. Ships on a canal or river, in the heart of a town, always produce a delightful effect.

On the other side is a row of houses, of which some old ones have preserved their peculiar style. The royal palace occupies the angle. A cupola resting on an octagon tower lifts its graceful contour above the roof, its carved sides giving grace to the arch of its top.

A bridge crossing the river calls to mind the bridge of St. Angelo, Rome, from the groups of

white marble that decorate it. These groups, eight in number, if our memory does not fail us, are composed each of two figures, one allegorical and winged, representing the country or glory, the other real, representing a youth led by means of several trials to triumph or to immortality. These groups, entirely classic in treatment, in the style of Bridan or Cartellier, are by no means lacking in merit, and present parts of the nude, evincing careful study. Their pedestals are ornamented with medallions to whose decoration the Eagle of Prussia, half real, half heraldic, lends itself with happy effect. They form rather too rich a decoration, according to our taste, for the simplicity of a bridge which opens in the middle to allow the passage of boats.

Further on, across the trees of the public gardens, appears the Old Museum, a large building in the Greek style with Doric columns, standing out from a background of paintings. At either end, bronze horses held in check by grooms, are outlined against the sky.

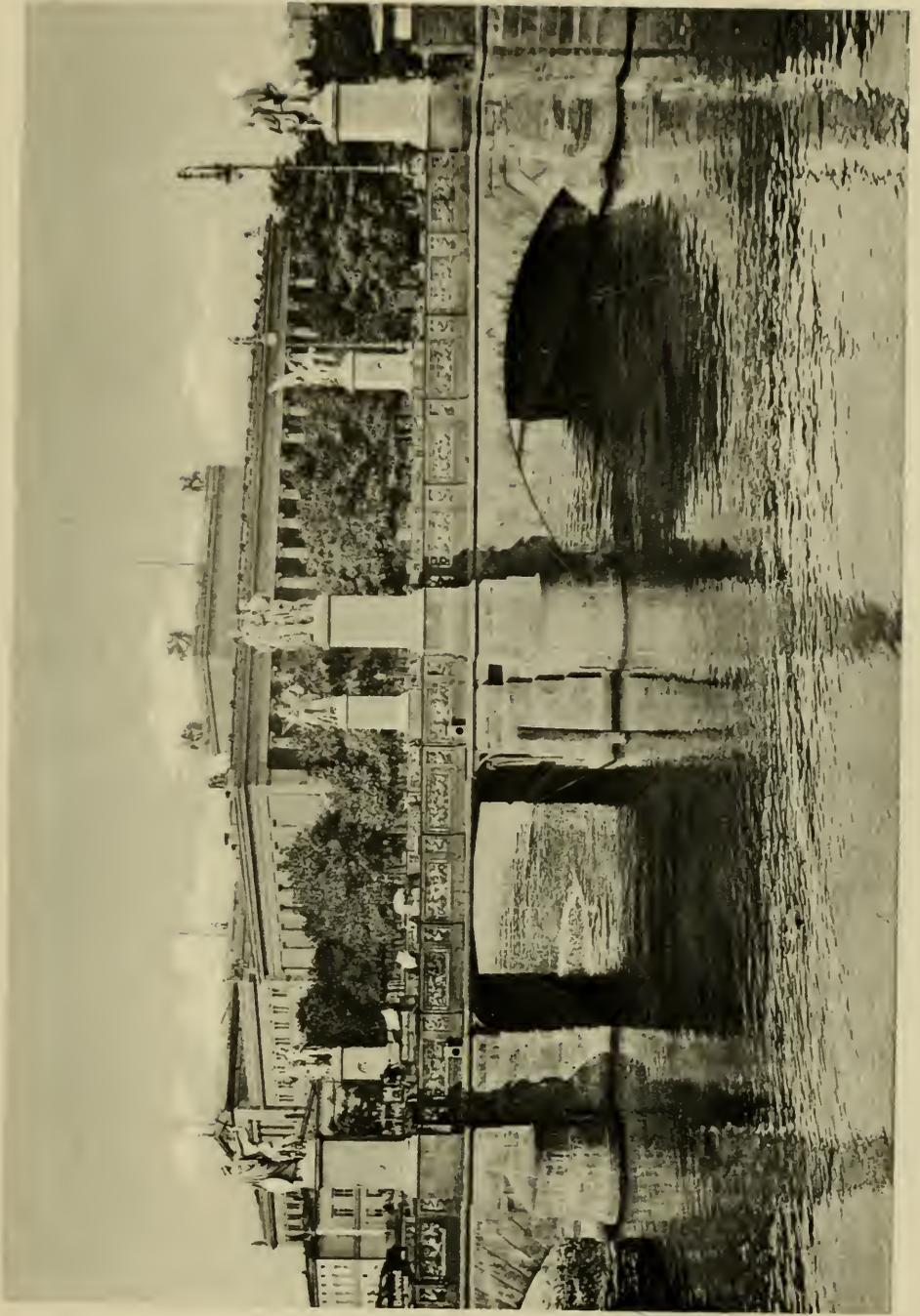
When the view is taken from the rear, the triangular façade of the New Museum can be seen.

A church, imitated from the Pantheon of Agrippa, fills the space on the right, and the whole forms a grandiose perspective, quite worthy of a great capital.

After crossing the bridge, one comes upon the dark façade of the palace, preceded by a terrace



Palace Bridge and Museum, Berlin





with carved balustrades. The sculptures of the portal are in the old German rococo, exaggerated style, bunchy, luxuriant, bizarre, which distorts ornament into a wild confusion of heraldic designs that we had already admired in the palace in Dresden. This sort of savagery in decoration possesses a certain charm, and amuses eyes, satiated with *chefs-d'œuvre*. It abounds in invention, originality, caprice, and at the risk of passing for a man of bad taste, we acknowledge a preference for this exuberance to the coldness of the Greek style of our modern monuments, imitated with more erudition than success. On each side of the door, great bronze horses, in the style of those of Monte Cavallo, paw the ground and are held in curb by naked grooms. We visited the apartments of the castle, which are beautiful and luxurious, but offer nothing of interest to the artist, unless perhaps, the old ceilings, all carved and curlicued, full of loves, of queer plants, of shell-work in the most curious taste.

In the concert hall is a tribune for musicians, of exquisitely sculptured work, covered with silver, producing the most charming effect. Silver is not used sufficiently in decoration, too much reliance being placed in the classic use of gold with other combinations of color. The chapel, whose dome rises high above the palace, ought surely to please Protestants. It is light, well-arranged, comfortable, and decorated with conservatism. But to

him who has visited Spain, Italy, France and Belgium, it does not seem at all impressive. We were rather surprised to see Melanchthon and Theodore de Bèze painted on gold, but perhaps that was as it should be.

Let us cross the "Place" and make a tour of the Museum. We must stop to admire an immense porphyry vase, upon a platform of the same material, before the staircase leading to the portico, painted by different artists under the direction of the celebrated Pieter von Cornelius.

The paintings form a deep frieze which continues along the sides of the portico, but is interrupted in the middle of the façade to permit entrance into the Museum.

On the left a poem of mythological cosmogony is shown, treated with that scientific philosophy that the German brings into all his compositions.

On the right the subject is purely anthropological and represents the birth, development and evolution of humanity.

If we were to describe in detail these two immense friezes the reader would assuredly be charmed with the ingenious invention, profound learning, and critical acumen of the artist: it would be something worthy of the symbolism of Creuzer. The mysteries of our earliest origin are penetrated and science displays its latest discoveries. If we were to show them to you in the beautiful German engravings, whose lights and shadows

are so exquisite, whose drawing is so exact, and as clear as those of Albrecht Dürer, with a harmony of detail that is enchanting to the eye, you would indeed admire the order of the composition, equalized with so much art, the groups placed in such happy relation to each other, the ingenious episodes, the perfect choice of attributes, the significance of the smallest trifle: you would find a grandeur of style, a dignity of pose, charming draperies and haughty figures, characteristic types, the boldness of muscular development of Michael Angelo, and a certain German savagery that is wonderfully attractive. You would be struck with the grandeur of conception and continuity of lofty ideas, generally lacking in French artists, and you would agree with the Germans in their estimate of Cornelius; but in the presence of the work itself the impression made is totally different.

Everyone knows that frescoes, even in the hands of those past-masters of the art,—the Italians,—do not possess the seductions of oil paintings. The eye needs to become accustomed to the flat, brusque tones before it is able to pick out its beauties. Many people who do not dare to say so, for nothing is more rare than to have the courage of one's opinion, think the frescoes of the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel commonplace: the great names of Michael Angelo and Raphael are of themselves sufficient to impose silence, and most people murmur sentences of very vague enthusiasm, then turning

away grow sincerely enthusiastic before some Madonna of Guido, or some Virgin of Carlo Dolce. But even making every allowance for the smaller attraction of the fresco the work here is extremely unattractive: if the mind is satisfied the eye suffers. Painting, as is the case with all the plastic arts, can only express its ideal through form and coloring. It is not enough to think, it must be done. The most beautiful intention must be translated by means of a skillful pencil, and if in great performances of this kind we willingly admit the simplification of detail, the absence of tricks to deceive the eye, a neutral color that is according to the best traditions, it is unfortunate we could not have been spared terrible discordances and awkwardness, together with extreme heaviness of touch. Whatever respect we may owe to the creation, the first quality of painting is that it should be painting, and truly such coarse execution is a veil between the spectator and the conception of the artist.

The only representative of this philosophic art in France is Chenavard, the author of drawings destined for the decoration of the Pantheon. A gigantic work, that the restoring of the church to religion has rendered useless: but for which some place should be found, for the study of these charming compositions would be very beneficial to our painters, whose defects are the reverse of those of the Germans, and who certainly do not err on

the side of redundancy of ideas. But Chenavard very properly will never leave the pencil for the brush. He writes his thoughts and does not paint them. But if some time in the future they should ever be placed on the walls of a building, expert practieians would not be lacking to color them properly.

We have no intention of making an inventory of the Museum of Berlin, which is rich in paintings and statues. All the great masters, who form the glory of royal galleries, are to be found here, more or less represented. But what is more remarkable than anything else is the numerous and very complete collection of the early paintings of every country and every school from the Byzantine period to those artists immediately preceding the Renaissance. The old German school, so unknown in France and so curious in every way, can be studied here as nowhere else. In a rotunda are tapestries after designs from Raphael, of which the drawings are in England, at Hampton Court.

The staircase of the New Museum is decorated by the remarkable frescoes of Kaulbach, which engravings and the French Exposition have caused to be well known. "The Dispersion of the Races" is especially fine, and everybody went to the shop-windows of Goupil to see that poetic "Defeat of the Huns," where the struggle begun by the bodies, is continued among the souls above the battle field covered with the dead. "The Destruction

of Jerusalem'' is well conceived, though a trifle too theatrical. It is like the end of the fifth act, and utterly unsuited to the dignity of the fresco. Homer is the central figure in the panel, epitomizing Hellenic civilization. This composition seems to us the least happy of all. Other unfinished paintings represent the climacteric epochs of the human race. The last will be, I am sure, quite of our time, for when a German sets himself to painting, universal history passes before him; the great Italian masters did not require so much for their masterpieces. But every civilization has its own tendencies, and this encyclopedic painting is one of the characteristics of the time. It would almost seem, that before throwing itself into new destinies, the world feels the need of making a synthesis of its past.

These compositions are separated by arabesques, emblems, and allegorical figures relating to their subjects, and are surmounted by a frieze in grey, full of ingenious and charming *motifs*.

Kaulbach seeks the beauty of coloring, and if he does not always find it, he at all events avoids lack of harmony; he uses too freely reflections, transparencies, luminous points and butterfly-like touches, and his frescoes resemble those of Hayez or Théophile Fragonard. He spreads a mesh of tones where a single one would be better. By too vigorous a treatment he hollows out the wall he should only cover: for fresco is a sort of tapestry,

and it should not attempt the depths of perspective suitable to architecture. In a word, Kaulbach is more occupied with the execution than the ideal, and his painting, although excellent, has nothing in it of the divine.

This staircase, colossal in size, is adorned with casts taken from the beautiful statues of antiquity. On the walls are copies of the metopes of the Parthenon and friezes from the Temple of Theseus, and on a landing stand the Pandrosion caryatides, in all their tranquil beauty and strength. The effect of the whole is grandiose.

And, are you asking what about the inhabitants? You have only spoken of houses, paintings and statues: Berlin is not a deserted city. No, of course not, but we were there only one day and were unable, especially as we spoke no German, to make very profound ethnological studies. Nowadays there is really very little visible difference between one nation and another. All have accepted the uniform of civilization: no particular color, no especial cut of the garment reminds you that you are abroad. The Berlinese men and women we meet in the streets or parks were not deserving of special mention, and the loungers under the Lindens resembled precisely the loungers of the Boulevard des Italiens.

This promenade, bordered by magnificent hotels, is planted, as its name indicates, with lindens, a tree whose "leaves are in the shape of a heart,"

according to Heinrich Heine, a peculiarity which should accord it the favor of all lovers and especial charms as a rendezvous. At its entrance rises the equestrian statue of Frederick the Great, of which a model in reduced size was shown at the Exposition.

As with the Champs Elysées in Paris, the walk ends with a triumphal arch, surmounted by a car and four bronze horses. After passing the triumphal arch, one finds oneself in a park, not unlike the Bois de Boulogne. Amid the lawns of this park, shaded with great trees, which have the vivid verdure of the vegetation of the North, and refreshed by the windings of a little stream, are flower-bedecked gardens, beyond which are pleasure houses and summer abodes, which are neither chalets nor cottages nor villas, but Pompeian houses, with their tetrastyle porticoes and walls of antique red. Greek taste is held in high honor in Berlin. On the other hand, they seem to despise the style of the Renaissance, so fashionable in Paris, for we did not observe a single building of that kind.

Darkness came all too soon, and after paying a hasty visit to a zoölogical garden, where the animals were all asleep except the cockatoos and parrots, who were swinging themselves on their perches and chattering the while, we returned to our hotel, strapped our luggage and betook ourselves to the train for Hamburg, that left at ten o'clock, which

prevented us from going to the Opera, as we so greatly desired to do, to hear the "Two Days" of Cherubini, and to see the "Sevillana" danced by Mademoiselle Louise Taglioni.

What! A single day in Berlin! There are but two ways of traveling, a rapid impression or a long study. We were sorely pressed for time. Deign then to be contented with this simple and rapid impression.



HAMBURG.



## II.

### HAMBURG.

To describe a railroad journey at night is indeed a difficult thing. One goes like an arrow across a cloud: no sort of traveling is so indefinite. One crosses provinces, and kingdoms, without being conscious of the fact. From time to time, the head of the conductor appears like a comet, then disappears seemingly headlong towards the ground; a sudden blaze of wax dazzles our eyes, heavy with the golden powder of sleep: a ray of moonlight clothes in fairy-like garb a landscape that is probably poor enough by day. There is absolutely nothing more to be said, and it would certainly not be in the least amusing were we to take from the guide book the names of the places through which the train carried us from Berlin to Hamburg.

It is seven in the morning when we reach this excellent, Hanseatic city of Hamburg. The town is not yet awake, or at least is rubbing its eyes as it stretches its arms. While awaiting our breakfast, we start off for a walk, as we always do, without guide or *cicerone*, in pursuit of the unknown. The Hotel de l'Europe, where we are stopping, is

situated on the bank of the Alster, a basin about the size of the Lake d'Enghien, and like it, full of swan. On three sides it is surrounded by hotels and magnificent houses, built in modern style. A dam, planted with trees and supporting the drain pump, forms the fourth side: beyond stretches a great lake. A café, painted green and built on piles, advances into the water from the most crowded quay, like the Café of the Golden Horn, in Constantinople, where we have smoked many a chibouk, as we watched the flight of the sea birds.

As we gazed upon this quay, this basin, these houses, we were conscious of an indefinable sensation, as if we had seen them all before. A confused remembrance rose from the depths of our memory. Could we have been in Hamburg without knowing it? Assuredly all these things are not new to us, and yet we are seeing them for the first time. Could we have kept the impression of a picture or photograph? Not at all.

While we were seeking the philosophic reason, for this recognition of the unknown, the idea of Heinrich Heine presented itself to us and then we understood. The great poet had often spoken of Hamburg in those plastic words, of which he possessed the secret, which is reality. In his "Reisebilder" he describes the café, the basin and the swan, and also the people of Hamburg walking about the streets. Heavens! how he has portrayed them! And in his poem, "Germania," every-

thing is so alive, so vivid, so real, that the actual sight of it all adds nothing more. We walked around the basin, graciously accompanied by a snow-white swan, beautiful enough to make one believe that Jupiter had formed the design of seducing a Hamburg maiden, and in order the better to complete his disguise was pretending to accept the crumbs of bread offered by a traveler.

At the end of the basin, on the right, there is a sort of garden or public promenade, crowned with an artificial hillock, resembling the labyrinth of the garden of "Plants." After visiting the garden, we retraced our steps. In every city there exists a beautiful quarter, a rich quarter, a new quarter, a fashionable quarter, whose inhabitants are very proud and whose servants look at one with hauteur. The streets are wide and straight, intersecting each other at right angles; the sidewalks of stone, brick or macadam, border the streets. The whole is brilliantly lighted. The houses look like hotels or palaces: their classically modern architecture, their irreproachable color, their varnished, bronze-decorated doors, fill all lovers of progress with joy. Everything is so clean, correct, healthy, full of light and air, recalling Paris or London. Look at the Exchange! it is superb! as fine as the one in Paris, and then one is allowed to smoke there! which is something. Further on are the Courthouse, the Bank, etc., etc.: built in the same style that Philistines of every

country adore. But it is certainly not there that the artist goes. Without doubt this house is expensive and unites every possible comfort and luxury. One feels that the inhabitant of such a shell must be a millionaire. But for my part I vastly prefer the old house with its overhanging stories, from whose roof some tiles are lacking, which is marked with a thousand characteristic details, revealing the existence of previous generations. In order to be interesting, a city must have the appearance of having been lived in, and man must have in some fashion endowed it with a soul. What makes these magnificent streets of yesterday so cold and tiresome is that they are not yet impregnated with human vitality.

Leaving the new quarter, we gradually plunged into the labyrinth of old streets, and we soon had before us a picturesque, characteristic Hamburg, a veritable ancient city with its impress of the Middle Ages, that would fill Bonington, Isabey and William Wyld with delight. We walk along slowly, stopping at every street corner to take in some detail, and rarely has a walk delighted us more. There were houses with rows of gables, or with overhanging stories, each with its rows of windows, or perhaps a single window with panes of glass separated by carved framework.

At the foot of each house were deep cellars, bridged across by the iron steps like a drawbridge. Wood, brick, stone, slate, mingled in a manner that

would enchant a lover of color, covered the little space of the façades that was left free by the windows. And above it all, roofs of red or violet tiles, with tarred boards, gay with dormer-windows in their steep slopes.

These steep roofs do well under northern skies: both rain and snow run off readily: they harmonize with the climate, and do not have to be swept off in winter.

It was Saturday, and Hamburg was making its toilette. Servants, perched up high, were cleaning windows, and the sashes which opened outward were jutting out, up and down each side of the street. A light mist, turned into gold by the rays of the sun, illumined the perspective and the light shining on the window panes was reflected on the house on the opposite side. It is difficult to imagine the rich, varied, strange tones assumed by a row of windows under the sun's rays, darting obliquely from the end of the street. Those windows of mysterious dwellings, with green, bubbling panes, in which Rembrandt loves to lodge his alchemists, offer nothing warmer, more transparent or more splendid under their vari-colored glaze.

When the windows were closed, of course, this bizarre effect disappeared; but there still remained the signs and bills which attracted the attention of the passer-by, by their symbolism and letters standing out from the walls into the public street. Doubtless a strict municipal government would for-

bid projections out of line: but they break the outline, amuse the eye and vary the view by unexpected corners. Sometimes it is a sign in colored glass, which the sunshine transforms into emeralds, rubies and topazes, which announces the shop of an optician or confectioner: sometimes suspended from a flourish of ironwork there is a lion holding a compass in one paw and a mallet in the other, the emblem of a guild of coopers. And again, there are the utensils of the barber, of copper so shining as to make the celebrated helmet of Mambrino seem green in comparison; signs on which are painted oysters, crabs, herring, sole—everything that is taken from the sea, and so on.

The portals of some of the houses are ornamented with rustic columns, curlicued projections, sloping frontals, chubby caryatides, little angels and loves, fruit and shells, the whole covered with a coat of paint, doubtless renewed every year.

The tobacco shops of Hamburg are simply too numerous to mention. Every few steps you see a negro, bare to the waist, in the act of cultivating the precious weed, or a Grand Seigneur, costumed like a Turk in a carnival, who is smoking a colossal pipe. Boxes form the sole ornamentation of the windows, with their pictures and labels, more or less true, placed with a certain degree of taste. Very little tobacco can be left in Havana, if one is to place confidence in these exhibitions, so rich in promises. As we have already said, it was

early. Servants, kneeling on the steps, or standing on the edge of the windows, were proceeding with the great Saturday cleaning. In spite of the sharpness of the air, their arms were bare to the shoulders, strong, red, spotted with those little crimson splotches which one notices in the pictures of Rubens, which are explained by the bite of the cold air joined to the action of water on blonde skins. Young girls of the *bourgeoisie*, with carefully dressed hair, low-necked and bare-armed were on their way to market. Wrapped in our overcoat, we trembled to see them so lightly clad. It is strange how the women of the North cut out their dresses and go with their heads and arms bare, while the women of the South cover themselves with jackets, cloaks and warm clothing.

To complete our pleasure, the quaint costume the traveler seeks so far to-day without always finding it, showed itself to our delighted eyes, quite simply in the streets of Hamburg, in the persons of the milksellers, who made us think of the female water carriers of Venice. Their costume consists of a skirt caught up on the hips, and finely pleated and held in place with stitches so that it spreads out only some distance below the waist, with a dark green or blue jacket fastening at the wrist. Sometimes the skirt is striped or is crossed with wide bands of cloth or velvet. Blue stockings, of which the short skirt allows a liberal view, and wooden

soled shoes complete this costume, which is by no means lacking in character.

But the head-gear is especially strange. On the hair, which is caught together at the back of the neck with a bow of ribbon, like a great black butterfly, is placed a straw hat in the form of a hollow plate turned upside down and cut away at the bottom, so that a pitcher or burden of any sort can be held in place.

Most of these milksellers are young, and their costumes make them seem almost pretty. They carry their milk in quite an original way. A sort of yoke, hollowed out around the neck to fit the shoulders tightly and painted a bright red, holds two buckets of the same color, and balancing each other on either side of the carrier allow her to walk straight and quickly between her double burden. There could not be a better way found in which to carry heavy weights. These milksellers display a freedom of ease and sureness that is indeed admirable.

As we saunter along, where chance may take us, we reach the maritime portion of the city, where canals replace streets. The tide is low and the ships are lying fast in the mud, their hulls exposed in attitudes that would enchant a painter in water-color. Soon the tide is in, and everything comes to life. We would suggest Hamburg to those artists who are following in the footsteps of Canaletto, Guardi, and Joyant. They will find at

every step subjects as picturesque and much newer than they can discover in Venice. This forest of salmon-colored masts, with their numberless ropes and yellow sails drying in the sunshine, the tarred, green-bordered poops, the yards blocking up the windows, the cranes covered with a wooden roof shaped like that of a pagoda, the pulleys lifting great weights and depositing them in the houses, the bridges that open to allow the passage of ships, the clusters of trees, the gables that ever and anon overtop the spires and domes of the churches, all bathed in smoke, lit up with sunshine, penetrated by a thousand lights and shadows, produce effects full of beauty and a most piquant novelty.

A bell-tower covered with copper, springing from the midst of all this rigging and houses, brings to mind, with its queer green tint, the tower of Galata in Constantinople.

We must not omit to mention several unusual things: carts, composed of a single plank and two little wooden wheels, to which two horses are attached are driven *à la* Daumont, the booted driver mounting one of his horses, instead of walking alongside of them. When there is but one horse the driver leads him, as they do in America. The narrowness of the streets, and the necessity of waiting till the bridges which have been opened to allow ships to pass are closed, occasion constant blockades, but the phlegm of both bipeds and quadrupeds prevents any thought of danger. The post-

men, clad in greatcoats of antique pattern, attract the attention of the stranger by their unusual appearance. It is so rare to see red in our modern civilization, so fond of neutral tints, which is so eager apparently to make the profession of the artist an impossibility.

In the markets, green vegetables and fruits predominated. It has been said that cooked apples are the only ripe fruits in cold countries. But on the other hand, flowers were abundant: great barrowfuls and basketfuls, fresh, brilliant and fragrant. Among the peasants who were selling all these things, we noticed some who wore round jackets and short trousers. They, as well as the milksellers, come from an island in the Elbe, where these old costumes are carefully kept, and whose inhabitants only marry with each other.

Not far from the market we espied a pink omnibus which went from Hamburg to Altona and back. Its construction struck us. The front was a sort of coupé, with a top in which were windows, which could be lowered to keep the wind and rain from travelers, without obstructing their view. The body of the carriage, pierced with windows, is occupied with two benches opposite each other, and in the back the sides of the *imperiale* shelter the conductor, enabling him to go up or down under cover. Well, dear reader, are you saying that is a fine thing to talk so much about! "Tell us rather how many tons are taken in at the port;

in what year Hamburg was built; what is its population?" We really know nothing about all that, but the first traveler's guide will tell you it all. But had it not been for us you would never have known that in this good, Hanseatic town there were pink omnibuses.

Since we are on the subject of the peculiarities of Hamburg, we must not forget to mention the signs on certain shops: Shop *de galanterie, grand assortiment de délicatesses*. What! Is gallantry a commodity in Hamburg? Is delicacy sold on the counter? Is it by weight or measure, in boxes or bottles? The spirit of barter and exchange must indeed be intense, when such articles are offered. A careful examination informed us that the shops of gallantry were but stores for novelties and gew-gaws, and the shops of delicacy are but stores for eatables.

As we were wandering about the streets we suddenly remembered how much Rabelais talks of the smoked beef of Hamburg, which he praises highly, and which we expected to see piled up mountain high in front of the butcher shops. But there is no more Hamburg smoked beef at Hamburg than there is Brussels sprouts at Brussels, Parmesan cheese at Parma, or Ostend oysters at Ostend. Perhaps some may be found at Wilkins's, where you can just as well ask for bird's-nest soup, for mock-turtle in which a calf's-head does not count, for *kari à l'indienne*, for elephant's-feet dressed like

chicken, for bear hams, for bison steak, sterlets from the Volga, ginger from China, preserves of roses, and a few other cosmopolitan dainties. Sea-ports have this good quality, that almost anything can be found in them. They are just the places where eccentric people ought to live—that is if they do not wish to be talked about.

As it grew later the crowds in the streets increased, women predominating. They enjoy great liberty, apparently, in Hamburg. Very young girls were walking about quite alone, and what seemed wonderful to us, the children went to school by themselves with their little baskets and slates in their hands. With us, if they were left to their own devices, they would run off to play hop-scotch or entertain themselves in some way equally delightful to the youthful fancy.

In Hamburg the dogs are muzzled all the week except on Sunday, when they have an opportunity to bite if they feel so inclined. They are taxed and are highly esteemed; but the cats look sad and neglected. Recognizing in us a friend, they looked at us sadly and said, in their cat language, to which long habit has given us the key: "These Philistines, busy making money, despise us and yet our eyes are as yellow as gold dollars. In their foolishness they think we are good for nothing but to catch rats, we the wise, the dreamers, the free-thinkers, who turn the wheel of mystery as we repose on the sleeve of the prophet. We will allow you to pass

your hand over our backs so full of electric sparks,  
but please tell Charles Baudelaire that he must  
deplore our sorrows in a charming sonnet.”



SCHLESWIG.



### III.

#### SCHLESWIG.

THE city of Altona, to which runs the pink omnibus which we have mentioned, commences with an immense street on the sides of which are little theatrical booths and shows. It is somewhat like the Boulevard of the Temple in Paris, though that is a queer resemblance on the frontier of the State of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. But then Hamlet loved comedians, and would give them advice like a reporter.

At the end of the street is the station of the railroad which leads to Schleswig, which is our destination.

Going to Schleswig? Yes. Is there anything very remarkable in that? We promised, if ever we were to pass near Denmark, to pay a visit to a charming friend, the mistress of a château, but a few hours distant. Here we are then, started on our way, a prey to uncertainty, having had much difficulty in making the ticket agent understand where we wished to go; for here German is further complicated with Danish. Happily our traveling companions, very distinguished young people, came to our assistance in a French like that spoken by

Schmueke and Baron de Nucingen in Balzac's "Comedie Humaine," but which does not on that account sound any the less like the most delicious music to our ears. They begged to place themselves at our disposal. When in a strange land one is reduced to the condition of a deaf mute, one cannot help overwhelming with maledictions the man whose idea it was to build the tower of Babel, and through his pride bring on the confusion of tongues. Seriously, to-day, when the human race circulates, like the strong blood, through the arterial net-work of iron roads, in all the quarters of the globe, a congress of nations should be called together to decide upon the adoption of a common language—French or English—which, like the Latin of the Middle Ages, should be the general, universal human language, so to speak. It should be taught by law at all schools and colleges, each nation keeping, of course, its own native tongue. But let us leave this dream, which will surely happen in the near future, through one of those means, that necessity alone can invent, and while awaiting its fulfilment let us congratulate ourselves that the noble language of our country is spoken, or at least stammered wherever one may wander, by all those who claim to be educated, learned, or well-bred.

Night comes quickly in these short autumn days, and the landscape, which is rather flat, disappears in the uncertain shadows that change the form

and character of objects. We might just as well have gone to sleep, but we are one of those tiresome, conscientious travelers, so every now and then we felt it incumbent upon us to thrust our head out of the window and endeavor to distinguish something by the grey light of the rising moon. Fatal imprudence! We had never thought of our hat, and the wind, increased by the rapidity of the train under full steam, seized it with a dexterity worthy of Robert Houdin or Macaluso, the Sicilian prestidigitator. For an instant we saw it whirl round like a wandering star; in a few seconds it had totally disappeared and we ruefully remained inside—hatless. A young man opposite us began to laugh gently, then opening his bag took out a little student's cap which he begged we would accept. It was not a moment that admitted of ceremony; we could not stop the train to get another hat, and moreover the countryside was not, apparently, absolutely strewn with hat shops. So thanking our good-natured fellow-traveler as best we could we placed on our head, taking care this time to fasten the cord, the narrow cap, which made us look like a peat-covered house of Heidelberg or Jena, of uncertain age. This melodramatic incident was the only one that happened on our way, though it gave us a fine idea of the hospitality of the country. At Schleswig the railway goes beyond the station and stops in the middle of a field like the last line of a letter suddenly interrupted.

An omnibus took possession of us and our trunks, and feeling sure it would go somewhere, we let it go on without a protest. The intelligent vehicle deposited us before the best hotel in town, and there, as the papers say, "we entered into conversation with the natives." Among them was a boy who could speak enough French to give us a glimpse of his meaning, and—what was still more wonderful—could understand sometimes what we said to him.

Our name inscribed in the travelers' book was a flash of light! Our hostess had been warned of our impending arrival and word had been left that we would be sent for as soon as we arrived, but as it was late we determined to wait until tomorrow. Our supper consisted of warmed-over partridges, without sauce or preserves, and we betook ourselves to bed, without hope of sleep, between the two eider-down cushions which compose the German and Danish beds.

The messenger, dispatched the night of our arrival, did not return till quite late the next day, the distance from Schleswig to L—— being nine leagues. The report he brought back was not very reassuring. The mistress of the château was at Kiel or Eckernfoerde, or perhaps at Hamburg. She may even have gone on to England. It is sad to make a visit to Denmark and to leave a card turned down at the corner, saying: "I will not return this way."

Three telegrams were forthwith sent to three places, and while awaiting an answer we wandered about Schleswig, which has an individuality of its own. The city stretches out on each side of a long street into which smaller streets run, like small bones to the chief bone of a fish. There are beautiful, modern houses which, as usual, are quite without character; but the smaller houses have a character their own. They are of one story, not higher than nine or ten feet, with a fluted tiled roof. Wide windows occupy the entire front; and there, in porcelain, faïence or terra-cotta pots, are blooming all sorts of flowers—geraniums, verbenas, fuchsias, green plants, and that without exception. The poorest house is full of flowers like the others. And under the shade of this fragrant blind the women were sitting, knitting or sewing and glancing out of the corners of their eyes at the rare passer-by, reflected in the little window mirror, the noise of whose footstep resounded on the quiet street. The cultivation of flowers is one of the passions of the North: in a country in which they grow naturally no one thinks much about them.

The church of Schleswig was a great surprise. Protestant churches are generally very uninteresting from an artistic point of view, unless the reformed religion should happen to be installed in a one-time Catholic sanctuary. The naves are generally white-washed, the white walls guiltless of pictures or bas-reliefs, and the body of the church

is filled with shining, polished benches. It is clean, comfortable, but by no means beautiful. The church here encloses a *chef-d'œuvre* of a great, unknown artist, a triptych retable of carved wood, representing in a series of bas-reliefs, separated by exquisite designs, the different scenes of the drama of the Passion.

The name of the artist is Brüggemann—and he is worthy of a place with Michel Columb, Peter Vischer, Montagna and Cornejo Duque,—and yet he is almost unknown to fame. And apropos of this, have you ever noticed how sculptors of equal or superior talent are less known than painters? Their heavier work, fastened to a monument, can not be moved or sold, and their severe beauty, denuded of the seductions of color, does not attract the attention of the crowd.

Around the church are mortuary chapels, well designed and producing a fine decorative effect. A vaulted chamber contains the tombs of the ancient Dukes of Schleswig—massive stones, emblazoned with arms and historical inscriptions, by no means lacking in character.

Around Schleswig stretch large salt-ponds which communicate with the sea. We walked along the highway, watching the while the play of the sunlight on the wind-wrinkled wavelets. Sometimes our walk extended to the château, turned now into barracks, or to the public garden, a sort of miniature St. Cloud, with its falling cascade, its dol-

phins and other aquatic monsters, but not one drinking a drop of water. What a sinceure is the office of a Triton in a basin of the Louis XV. sort! I would ask nothing better. Finally, quite worn out with waiting and having exhausted the amusements of Schleswig, we determined to take a carriage and start for L—— ourself.

We rolled along, noticing on each side lagunes considerable in size, bordered with sorb-trees whose rich, crimson blossoms were emblazoned by the rays of the setting sun. Nothing could be more charming than this alley of carmine umbrellas. It might have been an avenue of coral leading to the enchanted castle of Undine.

Birch, ash and pine-trees succeed the sorb-trees, and we reach the post-house, where the horses are not changed, but merely fed, while we take a glass of beer and smoke a cigar in a low-ceilinged, quaintly-windowed room, and the maids stand chatting with the postilions, who are drawing great puffs from their porcelain pipes, in attitudes and colors loved of Ostade or Meissonier.

In the meanwhile twilight fell, then night, if a superb moonlight may be called night. The way was longer than we had expected, increased, moreover, by our impatience to reach the end, and the horses kept up their gentle little trot, caressed on the flank by a most phlegmatic driver.

At each group of houses, whose lights flashed before our eyes across the openings in the foliage,

we bent forward to see if we had reached our goal, for we held in our hand a card upon which was engraved a vignette of the château, where we had been invited to pass several days long before, but the end of the journey seemed ever to recede, and the postilion, who did not appear at all sure of his way, spoke to several peasants whom he met, or who were drawn to their doors by the sound of wheels. The road, for the rest, was magnificent, sometimes shaded with great trees, still in full leaf, or sometimes bordered with evergreen hedges through which the moon darted a thousand rays of light, and which cast shadows upon the sand in a thousand queer shapes. When the trees allowed us to catch a glimpse of the sky, we saw Donati's comet, glowing, disheveled, enmeshing the stars in the lines of its tail. A few days ago we had seen it in Paris, so feeble, so vague, so uncertain! Within a week it had grown in a fashion to terrify an age more superstitious than ours. In this strange, blue light, pierced with deep shadows into which the horses entered with fright, everything assumed strange, fantastic shapes. The road ascended in gentle slopes. Between the trees and the hedges we lost sight of the sky, and were uncertain how to proceed. One moment we thought we had reached the end of our course. A habitation of charming aspect, all silvered by the moonlight, stood out from a dark mass of verdure, its light trembling on a piece of water that corresponded

perfectly to our description of L——, but the postilion kept on. Soon the carriage entered an avenue of trees so old they must form the entrance to a château. On the left, water gleamed in the moonlight, and we fancied we caught glimpses of buildings of considerable size. Suddenly the carriage turned and the wheels sounded on a bridge, crossing a wide moat. At the end of the bridge a low gate opened into a sort of bastion, to which only the portcullis was lacking. The gate opening we found ourselves within a circular court like the interior of a donjon, and for the second time the carriage was swallowed up by the darkness. All this dimly seen amid the moonlight and shadows possessed a feudal, medieval air, the appearance of a fortress, that was rather disquieting. Could the postilion by any chance have made a mistake and taken us to the manor of Harold Harfagar, or of Biorn, of the Shining Eyes? All our surroundings were full of legend and fantasy.

At last we emerged into an immense open space bounded by great buildings forming a semicircle, which the night prevented us from seeing accurately, but whose aspect was indeed formidable.

The chord of this arc was formed by the manor-house itself, whose imposing mass rose from the bank of a lagune, and its lofty façade was flooded with moonlight, while here and there a window flashed like the scales of a fish.

Although it was by no means late, the entire

château was to all appearances wrapped in sleep. It seemed like a château in a fairy tale, under the power of enchantment, where the prince is arriving who is to break the charm. The postilion reined up his horses before a bridge which, in the olden time, must surely have been a drawbridge, and then at last lights appeared at the windows. The door was opened a little way; servants approached the carriage, spoke a few words in German and took possession of our luggage, casting at us the while looks of surprise, mingled with distrust. It was quite impossible for us to ask a single question, and we were uncertain whether we were absolutely in L—— or not.

The bridge crossed a second moat filled with water, silvered here and there with the moonlight, which ended at a portico flanked by two granite columns that gave entrance to a broad vestibule with a floor of black and white marble and walls of carved oak, gilded at the top. Stags' heads were hung on the walls, and two little cannon of polished brass pointed their muzzles towards us—which seemed to us rather inhospitable—cannon in a hall in the nineteenth century! We were conducted into a salon furnished with all the elegance of modern luxury.

Among the paintings which adorned the walls we discovered a portrait, the work of a celebrated painter, representing the mistress of the house in Oriental costume, and we beheld it with joy. We

had not then made a mistake! A young governess, who had come down to receive us, spoke only in unknown tongues, and truth to tell appeared quite alarmed by our invasion.

We pointed to the portrait, pronouncing the name of the owner, and presented our card. All distrust disappeared at once and a charming little girl of twelve, who had been standing some distance away looking at us with the inscrutable eye of childhood, advanced and said: "I can speak French." We were saved. The mistress of the place, who had been absent for two days, was to return on the morrow, and had given orders in regard to us. A supper was served and afterwards we were conducted to our room up a monumental staircase that would readily have held an entire Paris house. The maid placed on the table two candlesticks, in which were two great German candles as large as church tapers, and retired. The room, one of a suite of three or four, looked passing strange. Over the mantelpiece little loves, painted in red and looking much more like little devils, were warming themselves at a brazier, and were meant to represent winter. The moon poured in a flood of light through the great windows which, in spite of the candles, assumed fantastic shapes on the floor.

Moved by a feeling similar to that of the heroines of Anne Radcliffe who loved, lamp in hand, to wander through castles' halls before going to

sleep, we made a tour of discovery through the spot where fate had placed us. At the end of the suite a little salon, furnished with mirrors, offered no hiding place suitable for ghosts. Even the engravings were most reassuringly modern.

The room next my bedroom was not so satisfactory. Old pictures, darkened with time, hung on the walls. They represented formidable dogs, held in leash by negroes, and underneath were written their names, as on the portraits of the dogs of Godefroy Jadin. By the uncertain light of the candle they all seemed ready to lash their tails, open their huge throats with deep growls, and tug on their collars preparatory to hurling themselves upon us. The negroes rolled the whites of their eyes at us, and one dog especially, Raghul by name, looked at us with a cruel fierceness. The three rooms were surrounded by a corridor which was also a picture gallery, the walls of which were covered with the portraits of ancestors and historic personages.

They were men of fierce appearance, wearing wigs and steel armor studded with gold nails and crossed by great orders. Their hands grasped a commander's baton like the statue of Don Juan, and their helmets were placed on cushions at their sides. There were haughty and puissant dames in costumes of different reigns, looking from the depths of their frames with long-forgotten coquetries and old-fashioned graces. There were im-

posing, crabbed dowagers, young ladies powdered and in court costume, with pointed corsages and vast panniers, displaying ample skirts of rose or salmon damask embroidered in silver, pointing haughtily towards jewelled crowns on velvet-covered tables.

These noble personages, pale, discolored by time, assumed an alarmingly ghostlike appearance. Certain colors resisted the passage of the years better than others, which produced the most curious effects. A youthful countess of exceeding grace had kept, along with her extreme pallor, lips of intensest red and eyes of intensest blue, and these features, apparently instinct with life, contrasted with the deadly pallor of the face, produced an extraordinary effect. Some one seemed to be gazing at you through this canvas as through a mask.

These portraits, as numerous as those shown by Ruy Gomez to Charles V. in *Hernani*, reached to the corner of the corridor.

Arrived there, not without experiencing that shiver which comes to even the bravest who find themselves in a dark, unknown and silent spot, surrounded by representations of those who have once lived, but whose form seen here, has long ago fallen into dust, we stopped in hesitation at sight of the corridor stretching out indefinitely, full of mystery and shadows. The light of our candle could not reach the end, but projected on the wall a grinning silhouette of ourselves which had fol-

lowed us like a dark servant, parodying our gestures with melancholy fidelity.

Being unwilling to turn craven in the presence of our shadowed self, we kept on. In the middle of the corridor, at a place where a projection of the wall would seem to indicate the passage of a chimney, a grated door attracted our attention. Placing the light at the opening we caught sight of a winding staircase that was lost in unseen depths below and ascended, Heaven alone knew where. The color of the plaster around the door indicated that the opening had been made long after the stairs had been built, doubtless when the secret of the staircase was discovered.

Decidedly the château of L—— was made after that of Angelo, the Tyrant of Padua, and at night surely “steps must be heard within the walls.” The corridor ended in a carefully closed door, more recent than its surroundings, and had we known the legend attached to the condemned chamber our dreams would surely have been bad. Happily we did not, and in the morning it was with a distinct feeling of satisfaction that we watched the pure light of day filter through the windows and curtains.

With the fancies induced by night all fled, the feudal manor-house showed itself simply under the form of an ancient château, modernized. It was the ancient form brought out by the moonlight which we had seen the night before, and the effect

produced was not altogether an illusion. Amid the ancient fortress the peaceful life of our time had taken up its abode without at all destroying the principal lines, and amid the darkness the error was quite permissible. The lofty semicircular buildings, worthy of a princely residence, before serving as stables and offices, must have been fortresses. The entrance, with its two low archways, its drawbridge changed into a bridge, and its broad moat, seemed quite capable of resisting an assault. Above the first gate a bas-relief, faded by time, shows Christ on the cross surrounded by the Holy Women, protecting two rows of stone coats of arms, incrusting into the massive brick wall.

The château, surrounded on all sides by water, rises from a foundation of blue granite, its red walls crowned with a roof of violet tiles and pierced with windows of charming contour.

On the opposite side a second bridge crosses the first moat, and a little further on, after having traversed quite a bit of land, one comes to a second bridge across the second canal, circling like a ribbon around the habitation.

Beyond lie the gardens. Great trees, vigorous in spite of their age, keeping still their foliage, though the autumn was well advanced, and grouped with taste, bordered this exquisite spot. A vast lawn, green as an English one, over which are scattered beds of geraniums, fuchsias, dahlias,

verbenas, chrysanthemums, Bengal roses and other hardy flowers, stretches in velvet loveliness to a hedge, from which extends a long avenue of lindens, terminating in a ha-ha, beyond which are rich pastures dotted over with cattle.

A ball of burnished bronze, placed upon a truncated column, detracts greatly from the dignity of this superb view. It is a German fashion, and is not to be laid at the door of the chatelaine. A similar ball is placed in the courtyard of the château in Heidelberg.

On the right, a rustic pavilion, covered with clematis and running vines, offers to one its sofas and armchairs made from curiously knotted branches, and a succession of hothouses reach out their glass roofs to the rays of the noontide sun. These hothouses, though of different temperatures, communicated with each other. In one, orange, lemon and cedrat-trees, loaded with fruit in different stages of maturity, looked as if they were in their native soil, and by no means regretted, as did the chilly Mignon, "the land where the lemon ripens." In another cacti bristled with thorns, banana-trees displayed their long tender leaves, and orchids, in hanging pots of pink clay, tossed about their frail garlands. A third enclosed camellias in full bloom, on whose brilliant green leaves nestled snowy buds; still another was reserved for rare, delicate plants, which absorbed the sun's rays from a series of steps; cages, paint-

ed, gilded, adorned with glass trinkets, hung from the ceilings, full of birds who, deceived by the warmth, caroled and trilled as in the springtime. A last room, painted like a trellis, served as a gymnasium for the children of the château.

In front of the conservatories a little rockery, covered with running plants terminated in a sort of fountain whose basin was made of an enormous shell. How great must have been the size of the primitive inhabitant of this shell, which was quite capable of carrying Aphrodite over the azure seas. Further on peaches hung their ruddy, velvet cheeks from branches fastened against the wall, and grapes, whose roots alone were exposed to the open air, ripened behind glass fastened to the wall.

A wood of fir-trees stretched its dark foliage to the rear of the garden, to which it was joined by means of a light foot-bridge that spanned a deep trench half filled with water. We crossed. Everyone knows that the lower branches of the fir dry up as the tree develops and points heavenward its spire of verdure. The whole floor of the forest resembled a painting in sepia, to which the artist has not yet added the touches of green.

Into the warm red shade, the sunlight flashed its brilliant beams from branch to branch, shedding a flood of glory on the brown, needle-covered earth. A sweet, aromatic odor was wafted to us by a gentle breeze, and the forest quivered with a vague murmur, like a sigh from a human breast.

An avenue led from the end of the wood, which was separated by a ditch from the meadows in which were the cows and horses. We retraced our steps and entered the château.

After awhile the little girl, who spoke French, ran to tell us that her mother had arrived. We told the lovely chatelaine of our nocturnal invasion of her manor-house, expressing our regret that we had not had a dwarf to sound the olifant at the foot of the donjon. She asked if we had slept well, in spite of the weird position of our chamber, and if the ghost of the lady who had "starved to death" had appeared either in dreams or reality.

"Every castle has its legend," she continued, "especially if it is ancient—old. You have doubtless noticed that mysterious staircase that looks like the projection of a chimney. It leads to a room that cannot be seen from the outside and descends into the cellars. In this chamber a Lord of L—— once kept hidden from all eyes, and especially from those of his wife, a charming and devoted mistress who had accepted this seclusion in order to be able to live under the same roof as did he whom she loved. Every evening the Lord of L—— had a supper prepared, which he himself took from the cooks in the cellars below and carried up to his captive. One day, while away on an expedition, he lost his life and the prisoner, receiving no more food, died from hunger. Long

afterwards some workmen making repairs discovered the secret door and found at the foot of the staircase a little female skeleton, leaning in her rich robes in an attitude of despair against the wall, and found also the magnificently furnished apartment which had become for the poor unfortunate a tower of hunger, more ghastly than the prison of Ugolino, who had at least his sons and nephews to devour. Sometimes at night her ghost walks in the corridors, and if she meets with a stranger, she implores food with frenzied gestures. I will have you given a less lugubrious chamber.”

Under the guidance of the chatelaine we visited the state apartments, furnished in the style of the last century. In the dining-room, massive pieces of silver and services of old Dresden shone from behind the glasses of curiously carved sideboards. The immense salon, with five windows in front, all gold and white, contained royal portraits, and from the ceiling were suspended chandeliers of rock crystal, superbly decorated. Next to it a smaller salon, furnished in green damask, offered no special object of interest except a portrait of a knight in armor across whose breast shone the orders of the Elephant and of Dannebrog, and who was smiling with a grace worthy of Versailles. Through the inadvertence of the artist he had turned his back on his fellow, a young lady in powdered hair and a superb court costume of apple-green taffeta, shot with silver, which

seemed to greatly annoy her, for she had turned her head half over her shoulder. This youthful dame would have been exceedingly pretty had it not been for a nose of too aristocratic a curve which hung over her mouth like the beak of a parrot about to eat a cherry. Her gentle, sad eyes seemed to deplore this nose, so absurdly Bourbon, which spoiled a charming face, in spite of the artist's effort to attenuate it.

As we were lost in the contemplation of this singular visage, at the same time attractive and ridiculous in spite of its grand air, the lady of the house said to us: "There is also a legend about this picture, but do not be frightened; it is not at all terrible. If one sneezes in passing before the countess of the 'long nose' she will reply by a motion of the head, or a 'God bless you,' like the portraits in inn chambers in fairy stories. Be careful not to take cold and the picture will give no sign of life." The bedchambers contained great tapestried or damask beds, their heads against the walls and little alleys on each side. According to the old fashion, the hangings of one consisted of paintings on linen in distemper, representing shepherd scenes in which the German artist had essayed to imitate the gallantries of Boucher, but which resulted in gauche affectation and queer effects of color.

"Would you like this chamber?" we were asked. "It is rococo and warranted against nocturnal in-

vasions." We declined, for we are not fond of seeing around us in the silence and solitude, lighted only by a feeble candle, those figures that seem to desire to leave the walls and implore us for the souls the artists had forgotten to give. Our choice fell upon a pretty little room, furnished in chintz, with a little, modern bed, situated in an angle of the castle, with two high windows and which was quite free from mysterious staircases or dark halls, and whose walls, struck with the hand, returned no hollow sound. The only drawback to it was that in order to reach it we must pass before the "lady of the parrot nose," and we acknowledge it quite shamelessly, too polite portraits are not to our taste; but we were quite free from cold and the young countess could remain tranquilly within her crested frame.

But what was most curious of all in this manor was a hall of the sixteenth century, preserved intact, which made us regret that the owners of the castle had thought it necessary, towards the beginning of the present century, to renew their apartments in the style of the period of Versailles. It is difficult to understand the despotic influence of that period on fashions, or to enumerate the exquisite things it destroyed.

This hall was panelled in oak, carved to form frames of equal size and relieved with light arabesques of gold, softened to harmonize with the wood. Each panel contained an emblematic paint-

ing in oils, accompanied by a device in Greek, Latin, Spanish or Italian, German or French, suitable to the subject represented. They were in turn moral, gallant, chivalrous, Christian, philosophic, haughty, resigned, plaintive, witty, obscure. Conceits entered into rivalry with sarcasms. Puns prided themselves upon their wit. Latin, scowling enigmatically, assumed sphinx-like airs to the limpid Greek. Platonism *à la* Petrarch and amorous subtleties were inextricably entangled in impossible explanations. Thus written over from ceiling to floor this hall could readily have furnished devices for a tilting-yard, the garters of Tembleque, the navajas of Albacete, the seals of an engraver's shop, the sweetmeats of a confectioner. But amid such nonsense and many puerilities, there sparkled some lofty phrase of unexpected dignity that was worthy of being inscribed on the setting of a jewel or the blade of a sword. We know no other example of a similar decoration. Doubtless legends and interlaced ciphers are often met with, but nowhere else the emblem and motto taken for the only theme of decoration.

Now that you know all about the castle, let us take a turn in the environs. Two coal-black ponies, attached to a light phaeton, are tossing their manes and pawing the ground at the end of the bridge. The chatelaine takes the reins in her lovely hands and we are off. We cross great pasture fields where more than three hundred cattle are chewing

the end in peace, in attitudes that would fill Paul Potter or Troyon with delight. The bulls, more gentle than those of Spain, let us pass without other manifestation than a passing look and kept on browsing. The horses, stirred to emulation by the gait of the ponies, galloped along with us for awhile, but finally they too abandoned us. Gently undulating fields stretched all around us, bounded by hedges. A crossed bar served as a gate for each field, and we had to jump quickly from the phaeton to raise it, else would the fiery little ponies have jumped over it, carriage and all.

In twenty minutes we reached a wood most picturesquely placed on a little hill. Elms, oaks, ash trees with great trunks and thick foliage grew in shapes and forms so often assumed by trees on a slope. The wood was full of deer, and badgers dug their homes, sure of being undisturbed by man, while here and there, as if to remind us of the North, pine-trees stretched out their sombre green limbs.

We were amazed at the freshness of this vegetation, but a stone's throw from the sea, whose salt breath generally burns the leaves; but the trees grow strong in the damp earth and resist with impunity the strong winds. On issuing from the forest we beheld just before us the gulf, emptying into the North Sea, whose other extremity beats against the ice of the pole, upon which in winter float icebergs full of white bears.

At this moment it certainly presented no such appearance. A clear sky, flecked with clouds, was reflected on its smooth bosom. A gentle breeze was waving the tops of some plants, tossing about some little shells, leaving a long line of foam on the shore.

On other days we made longer excursions; but big, white, gentle Mecklenburg horses replaced our little, black whirlwinds. A coachman of martial appearance drove us.

We visited a residence, surrounded like L——, with a double moat. There we admired greatly a hall whose ceiling was sculptured in medallions, representing the Muses, winged genii, and the emblems of music. An organ, placed on a beautiful platform, made us wonder whether it was meant for a concert hall or a chapel. The artists of the eighteenth century were not very particular in such matters; but were apt to mix up angels and loves, the glories of the opera and those of Paradise. The aged mistress of the house received us in a salon full of flowers, whose ceiling was curiously adorned with coats of arms in shell-work. A tray, full of peaches, pears and grapes, was brought in, according to the hospitable custom of the country where visitors are always served with refreshment. Near the house was a garden, or rather a park, with two avenues of superb lindens. In a basin, entirely covered with duckweed, a swan sailed about pushing aside the growth without effort.

The sight of the swan made us remember there were none at L——, although my little picture showed some. The winter before they had been eaten up by some foxes which had come over the ice and attacked them in their nests. Less melodious than their brothers of the Meander, no song had, at the supreme moment issued from their long necks, and only a few feathers remained to tell the tale.

Every now and then the carriage met with a more humble and quite grotesque vehicle; a great peasant, with hat on one side, pipe in mouth, and heavily booted, curled up in a child's carriage, was lazily having himself drawn along, not by great mastiffs such as Stevens paints on his canvases, but by three or four terriers, veritable "bow-bows," to borrow a word from baby's dictionary, so utterly disproportioned to the weight they were carrying as to make one burst into peals of laughter. These poor beasts were "leading a dog's life" in the saddest acceptation of the term. While we are on the subject of dogs, we would say that since we have been in Denmark, we have not seen a single Danish dog, that is of the sort that are white, spotted with black, and frequently with one blue and one brown eye. They here are generally of no special breed, mongrels without points, presenting no particular type, but resembling street dogs, but who conscientiously do their duty of escorting carriages amid ceaseless barking from

the entrance to the end of the village. These hamlets are clean and comfortable to a degree difficult to understand. The houses, built of brick, after a regular plan, generally roofed with tiles, though sometimes with thatch, with their clean square windows, in which are blooming rare plants in china pots, have rather the air of cottages than the dwellings of peasants. The little villas of the outskirts, rented at such high prices to Parisians, do not compare with these charming little red houses, with their background of verdure, and nearly always in close proximity to a sheet of water.

The appearance of the inhabitants does not diminish the effect of the picture. Their dress is neither poor nor ragged. The man wears a cap with a Prussian visor, his trousers stuck in his boots, a short waistcoat and a coat with long skirts. The women's dresses are short-sleeved, rather low-necked, and their heads are bare. It made us cold only to look at them in this cool weather in their thin dresses, either white, pink, lilac or blue. Their red arms, spotted as in Jordaens' pictures, had that robustness, assumed by portions of the body exposed to the air. But this fashion is only followed by the women of the lower classes, and servants. The women of position dress in the French manner.

Another day was occupied with an excursion to Eckernfoerde, a little town some leagues distant from L—. The road winds between hedges,

starred with berries of every color, mulberries, sorbs, prunellas and the coral buds of the eglantine; it was charming. Or else we would pass between great trees, through villages, or past fields, that were being worked by superb horses, who were going round and round. At last we reached the sea by a road, one side of which was bathed by the ocean, and along the other were lovely cottages, half hidden in flowers, that are rented in the season to bathers, for Eckernfoerde is a bathing resort, like Trouville or Dieppe, in spite of its rather northern latitude.

Carriages and bath-houses, scattered over the beach, bore witness to the fact that there were brave ones of both sexes who did not fear to expose themselves to the assaults of the icy waves. Some brigs were dancing on the waves of the port, and near by, shaking and quivering, were quantities of those jelly fish which are animals although they do not look like it, and that we used to see when we were floating in the Gulf of Lepanto, on our return from Corinth, "where it is not permitted to every one to go," as runs the proverb.

Eckernfoerde, except for the peculiar air, that the masts of ships mingling with trees and chimney-tops always give a town, does not differ much in appearance from Schleswig. There are the same brick churches, the same houses with crossed beams, giving glimpses from behind pots of flowers of the same women sewing in low-cut

gowns. An unaccustomed animation enlivened the generally quiet streets of Eckerndorfe. Heavy carts were carrying into their respective cantons, soldiers on leave of absence. Although piled up together most uncomfortably, they seemed drunk with happiness, and perhaps also with beer.

At the castle the days glided by quickly in walking, fishing, reading, conversation and smoking, and the nights were troubled with no intrusive phantoms. The lady "who starved to death" did not come to beg bread; the princess with "the parrot nose" had no occasion to say "May God bless you." Only once a storm of rain, whipped by a terrible wind, dashed against the window-panes with sinister noise, like the flapping of owls' wings. The sashes shook, the woodwork creaked ominously, the trees groaned, the water poured from the roofs. From time to time the uproar struck against the door with blows like a man who is determined to enter and has not the key. But no one came in, and gradually the sighs, the murmurings, the groans—all the inexplicable noises of the night and the tempest—faded away in a decrescendo, that Beethoven could not have better graduated. The next morning the day was radiant, and the storm-swept sky shone with deepest blue. We would fain have lingered longer, but if it is certain that all roads lead to Rome, it is by no means sure that they lead to St. Petersburg, and we had already too long forgotten the end of

our journey, amid the delights of the enchanted castle. A carriage carries us to Kiel, where we will take the cars for Hamburg, from which point we start for Lübeck, where we are to embark on the liner the "Neva."



LUBECK.



## IV.

### LÜBECK.

IT was necessary to go to Kiel in order to reach the railroad. We made the journey in a carriage without incident other than a halt at a half-way house to rest the horses. While we were drinking a glass of beer in the principal room of the inn we espied written on the window-pane with a diamond this Spanish name: "Saturnina Gomez," which set our imagination to work in fine style. Doubtless the woman who wrote it was young and beautiful and forthwith we began to weave a romance, through which ran a remembrance of "The Spanish in Denmark" of Mérimée. At Kiel it began to rain and was soon pouring in torrents, which, however, did not prevent us from taking a fine walk along the sea beach while awaiting the Hamburg train.

Hamburg is a town good to see again, and we found as much pleasure as ever in strolling through the streets, so picturesque, so full of gaiety and life. We observed, too, numerous little details which had before escaped our notice. For example, chests studded with nails and padlocked, in the corners of the bridges, with a picture attached in

which, in order to stir the compassion, were depicted every imaginable accident that could happen at sea—lightning, fire, enormous waves, jagged reefs, overturned ships, and sailors clinging to the rigging, and finally Virgil's celebrated verse—

“Rari nantes, in gurgite vasto.”

Often a sailor, bronzed by the suns of many lands, fumbles in his tar-stained pocket and throws a shilling in the opening, or a tiny girl raises herself on tiptoes to deposit her little mite. The money is distributed among the families of those who are drowned. This chest, which gathers alms for the victims of the ocean, but two steps away from ships about to sail among the perils of the sea, expresses a feeling both religious and poetic. Human society abandons none of its members, and the sailor goes on his way more peacefully.

We must not forget the “beer tunnels,” a sort of subterranean drinking saloon peculiar to the country. The customers descend, like hogsheads, into a cellar, by several steep steps, and sit down in a cloud of tobacco smoke through which it is often difficult to perceive the gas jets. The beer is excellent, for Hamburg is a city “for the mouth.” The number of sellers of *delicatessen*, which include delicacies from every part of the world, attest that fact. There are also a great many confectioners. Germans, especially the

women, are like children over sweetmeats, and these shops are well patronized. People go there to munch bonbons, drink syrups and eat ices as with us to a café. At every step one sees signs, brilliant with gold, containing the word, *conditorei*. Surely there must be at least three times as many confectioners in Hamburg as in Paris.

Since the boat for Lübeck does not leave until the morrow, we took supper at Wilkins's, the restaurant-keeper of whom we have already spoken. This Hamburg Collot's shop is on the first floor, the ceilings are very low, and the little rooms into which it is divided are adorned with more luxury than taste. Oysters, turtle soup, a fillet with truffles, and a bottle of Widow Cliquot champagne frappé composed our simple menu. The windows, according to the Hamburg custom, are filled with more or less impossible dainties to which the world has been asked to contribute. They showed us in the kitchen great tubs, in which sea turtles raised their heads till they looked like serpents caught between two plates. Their queer little eyes regarded distrustfully the light that had been flashed upon them, and their feet, like oars each side of a dismantled galley, reached out to the sides of the vessel as if seeking an impossible flight. We hope they are not always the same ones that are shown to the curious, but that the *personnel* of the exhibition is occasionally changed.

The next day we breakfasted in an English

restaurant, in a glass pavilion from which we enjoyed a superb panorama-like view. The river rolled majestically amid a forest of tall-masted ships of every shape and size. Tugs tossed the water from their wheels, drawing in their wake great sailing ships that required the breath of the open sea. Others threaded their way among obstacles with that precision which makes a steamboat seem like an intelligent being, gifted with a will of its own and served by organs instinct with life. From this elevated point, the Elbe stretches wide as it approaches the sea. Its waters, sure of their destination, no longer hurry along, but flow quietly, placidly as a lake. Its other side lies low and green, dotted with dainty pink little houses half concealed by the smoke of the steamers. A ray of sunshine illumined the plain with a bar of gold. It was indeed charming, superb.

In the evening we went by train to Lübeck, across exquisitely cultivated fields, filled with summer houses, whose lawns were bathed with water over which hung willow trees. This German Venice has its canal, de la Brenta, whose villas, although not designed by San Michele or Palladio, are not the less charming with their lovely background of fresh verdure.

An especial omnibus took us and our luggage to the Hotel Duffeke. From the glimpses we caught in the dark, from the uncertain light of the lamps, the town appeared most picturesque, and in

the morning, when we threw open our windows, we saw that we had not been mistaken. The house opposite was thoroughly German in aspect. It was extremely high and terminated in a sharp gabled roof in the old fashion. It was not more than seven stories, but the windows decreased in number from the gable down, the last story containing but a single one. At each story the cross-bars expanding into masses of carving serve both as a support to the building and means of adornment. A very good method of architecture, which is too much lost sight of nowadays. It is not by concealing but, on the contrary, by accentuating the supports of the building that character is gained. This house was by no means unique in its construction, as a few steps taken in the street showed us. Lübeck is actually now, at least in appearance, the Lübeck of the Middle Ages, the ancient, chief city of the Hanseatic league. Modern life is played amid the old scenery, without much shifting of side scenes or change of background. What a pleasure it is to walk thus in the midst of forms of the past, to contemplate untouched the dwellings lived in by generations that have disappeared! Of course living man has a perfect right to model his shell to suit his habits, his tastes, his ways; but a new town is much less interesting than an old one. When we were children we used to get as a New Year's gift a Nuremberg box containing a miniature German town.

We used to arrange in a hundred shapes the little, carved, painted, wooden houses around the church with its slender spire and pink walls in which the outlines of the bricks were indicated by fine white lines. We would plant the two dozen curled painted trees and would go into raptures over that deliciously strange and wonderfully gay appearance that when spread out on the carpet was assumed by these tiny apple-green, pink, lilac, or grey houses, with their rows of gables and sloping roofs shining with red varnish. We thought that such houses did not really exist, but were made by benignant fairies exclusively for good little boys. The imagination of childhood gradually enlarged the boundaries of the gay little town, and we used to walk through its streets with the same precaution as did Gulliver in Lilliput. Lübeck brought back this long-forgotten childish sensation. We felt as if he were walking in a city of fantasy, taken from a gigantic box of playthings. And after all we really deserved this compensation to make up for all the architecture in good taste, that as a traveler, we have been forced to gaze at.

On coming out of the hotel a piece of sculpture, encased in a wall, arrested our eyes, on the lookout for curiosities. Sculpture is generally rare in a country where brick is used. This represented nereids or syrens, rather crude perhaps, but of an ornate and legendary individuality that filled us with delight. They formed part of some great

coats of arms in the German taste—an excellent theme of decoration when its use is understood, and the Middle Ages did understand it to perfection.

Our eyes next fall upon a cloister, the remains of an ancient monastery. This portico is at one side of a square, at the end of which rises the Marienkirche, a brick church of the fourteenth century. Continuing our walk we soon find ourselves in a market place, where is awaiting us one of those spectacles which recompense the traveler for many an annoyance. A monument, novel, unexpected, original in appearance, the old City Hall, in which was the hall of the Hanseatic league, suddenly stood before us. It occupies two sides of the square. Fancy in front of the Marienkirche, whose spires and copper-covered roof tower above it, a lofty brick façade, blackened by time, pierced by three bell-towers with pointed, copper-green roofs, lighted by two great rose windows, carved in openwork and emblazoned with escutcheons in the trefoils of its round windows, sable, two-headed eagles, on a field of gold, shields of gules and silver, ranged alternately and of the loftiest heraldic fashion.

To this façade is joined a *palazzino* of the Renaissance, in stone, utterly different in style, whose grey-white tone shows to wonderful advantage against the red background of old bricks. This palace, with its three voluted gables, its fluted

Ionic columns, its caryatides or rather Atlases (for they are men), its arched windows, its round, shell-like niches, its gallery pierced with three-cornered projecting windows, its arcades adorned with figures, its basement cut into diamonds, produces the most surprising and charming architectural dissonance. Very few buildings of this style and epoch are to be met with in the North. The Reform movement accommodated itself with difficulty to a return to pagan ideas and classic forms, modified by a graceful fancy.

The old German style reasserts its rights in the façade. Brick arcades with short granite columns support a gallery with round windows. A row of shields display their enamels and rich colors to advantage against the blackened wall. It is almost impossible to imagine the richness and effect imparted by means of so simple a decoration.

This gallery leads to a detached building, than which the imagination of the Middle Ages could invent nothing more singular or picturesque. Five turrets, hooded with steep roofs, lift their sharp points above the top of the façade, and are pierced with high, round windows, most of which are now unfortunately half blocked up, owing probably to the necessities of interior repairs. Eight great disks of gold representing full suns, two-headed eagles, and the silver and gules escutcheon, the coat of arms of Lübeck, are scattered with magnificent effect over this bizarre architecture. At

the bottom, arcades, with squatty little pillars, half conceal the shop of a goldsmith.

Returning towards the square, one catches a glimpse of the green spires of another church, and over the heads of the market women, selling their fish and vegetables, appears the outline of a little building with brick pillars which, in its time, must have been a pillory. It gives the final touch to the absolutely Gothic physiognomy of the square, which is not marred by a single modern house.

While we were thinking that this splendid *Stadthaus* should have another façade, we passed through a vaulted opening and found ourselves in a broad street and our admiration assumed new force.

Five bell-towers, jutting out from the wall and separated by long ogive windows, partly stopped up, repeated with a difference the façade we have just described. Rose windows displayed their curious designs, like models for tapestry. At the foot of the sombre edifice a delicious little *logette* of the Renaissance, built as an afterthought, served as an entrance to an exterior staircase which ran diagonally along the wall to a sort of overhanging cabinet, in exquisite taste. Delicate statues of Faith and Justice, charmingly draped, decorated the portico.

The staircase, carried over the arcades, whose arches increase in size as it ascends, are adorned with caryatides and grotesque heads. The cabinet

placed under the arched door leading to the market is crowned with a frontal on which a figure of Themis is holding scales in one hand and a sword in the other, not however forgetting to coquettishly puff out her draperies. A queer arrangement of fluted pilasters, fashioned like Hermes, and supporting busts, divided the windows of this aerial cage. Consoles with mythical *mascarons* completed this exquisite ornamentation, over which Time had passed his hand just enough to give to the sculptures that *flo*u that nothing can imitate.

The architecture of the rest of the edifice was more simple, consisting of a stone frieze representing masks, figures and foliage, but so worn, blackened and injured as to be scarcely discernible. Under a porch, which was supported by columns of bluish granite, alongside of the door, we observed two benches whose sides were formed of thick sheets of bronze, representing an emperor with his crown, globe and sceptre; and a savage as hairy as a beast, armed with a club and a shield, with the coat of arms of Lübeck, both very old.

The Marienkirche which, as we have already said, is behind the Stadthaus, is quite worth a visit. Its two towers are four hundred and eight feet high. A beautifully carved spire rises from the centre of the roof, at the point of intersection of the nave and transept. The towers of Lübeck all have this peculiarity, of being out of line, very perceptibly leaning to the right or left, but without

disquieting the eye, as in the case of the tower of the Asinelli in Bologna, and the leaning tower of Pisa. At a short distance from the town its towers, drunken and tottering, with their pointed hoods which seem to salute the horizon, present a strange, yet attractive outline.

On entering the church, the first curious thing one sees is a very old copy of the *todtentanz*, or "Dance of Death," from the cemetery at Bâle. We do not need to describe it in detail. The Middle Ages have embroidered numerous variations on this ghastly theme, of which the chief are assembled in that lugubrious painting, covering the walls of the chapel. From the pope and emperor to the child in its cradle, every human being enters in turn into the dance with the inevitable bugbear. But Death is not portrayed as a skeleton, clean, polished, white, with hooks at the joints, like the skeleton of an anatomical closet; that would be too pretty for the vulgar crowd. It appears as a dead body, in a more or less advanced state of decomposition, a few hairs bristling on its skull, black earth fills its half-empty eyes, the skin hangs from its breast like a ragged napkin, its flat stomach adheres horribly to the vertebrae of the spinal column, and its nerves, all bared, float around the muscles like broken strings around the neck of a violin. Not one of the awful secrets hidden in the tomb is forgotten. The Greeks respected the decencies of death, representing it only under the

form of a charming youth asleep. But the less delicate Middle Ages tore it from its coffin and exposed it naked, in all its horror and wretchedness, in the pious intention of edifying the living. In this mural painting Death has shaken off so little of the black soil of the grave that a careless observer could easily take him for an emaciated negro. Very rich, highly ornamented tombs, with statues, allegories, attributes, escutcheons, lengthy epitaphs hung on the walls or pillars, making a chapel for the dead, as in the church Dei Frari at Venice, give to the Marienkirche an interior worthy of Pieter Neeffs, the painter of cathedrals.

The Marienkirche contains two canvases by Overbeck, "The Descent from the Cross," and "The Entry into Jerusalem," which are greatly admired in Germany. They are full of the pure religious feeling, the grace and sweetness of the Master, which atone, in our opinion, for their archaic stiffness and crudity. Then, too, the delicacy of the execution shows that Overbeck studied the charming, early painters of the Umbrian school. Here, as in the picture in the Pinakothek in Munich, blonde Germany implores brown Italy for her artistic secrets.

There are still other paintings of the old German school, among the rest a triptych by Jan Mostaert, the examination of which must, perforce, be abandoned in order that at the instance of a beadle, eager for a fee, we may plant ourselves at

the foot of one of those complicated mechanical clocks which mark the course of the sun, the moon, and the date,—year, month, day, and even the hour,—and also witness the passage of seven little gilded, painted figures, representing the Seven Electors, which advance in a semicircle, each in his turn shaking his head with such vehemence and force that it is difficult, in spite of the sanctity of the spot, to help bursting into peals of laughter. His bow is made, the little figure turns with a jerk and disappears through a door.

The cathedral, which is also called the *dom*, is interesting in itself. In the middle of the nave, filling an entire arch, a colossal Christ is nailed on a cross, carved and adorned with arabesques; the foot of the cross rests on a beam, reaching from one pillar to the other, which is filled with holy women and pious personages, in postures of adoration and sorrow. On either side, Adam and Eve are arranging as decently as possible their costumes of the earthly paradise. Above the cross the keystone of the arch projects and serves as a support to a long-winged angel.

This suspended group, which looks light in spite of its size, is of wood, carved with great taste and skill. We do not know how to better define it than by calling it a sculptured portecullis, half lowered before the choir. And certainly it is the first time we have seen a similar arrangement. In the rear is the *jubé*, with its three arches, its gallery of

statues, its mechanical clock, where the hour is struck by a skeleton, and an angel bearing a cross. The baptismal fonts are shaped like little, carefully carved buildings with Corinthian columns, the space between representing Jacob struggling with the angel. The dome-like top is lifted by a cord suspended from the ceiling. We will say nothing of the tombs, the mortuary chapels, the organs, and only a few words of two ancient frescoes, which have a long inscription in Latin pentameters, telling of the miraculous deer set free by Charlemagne, with a collar telling the date of its freedom, which four or five hundred years afterwards was caught by a hunter on the spot where now stands the church.

The Holstenthor gate, a few steps from the wharf, is one of the most curious and picturesque specimens of German architecture of the Middle Ages. Two huge brick towers united by a building, through which opens an arch like the handle of a basket, is the design roughly sketched.

But it is difficult to imagine the effect produced by the height of the building, the steep roofs of the towers, the varied shapes of the windows, the dark-red and violet tones of the time-worn bricks. It is an entirely new experience for the painters of buildings or ruins, whom we shall send to Lübeck by the next steamer.

We would also recommend to them, quite near to the Holstenthor, close by the bridge, on the left

bank of the Trave, a half dozen old, crumbling houses leaning against each other as if for support, bulging out, bending over with six or seven rows of windows and denticulated gables, which cast their crimson reflection in the water like a red tablecloth a servant is washing. Heavens, what a picture Van der Heyden would have made of it all! Walking along the quay through which the railroad carries its freight trains, many an amusing and varied scene rivets the attention. On the farther bank of the Trave, among the little houses and clusters of trees, ships are in various stages of construction. Sometimes it is a wooden framework, like the skeleton of a stranded whale, sometimes it is a hull covered with its timbers, near which bubbles and smokes the caldron of the calker. On all sides sounds the gay hum of human activity. Carpenters hammer and nail, porters roll hogsheads, sailors swab the ships' decks, or half raise the sails to dry them in the sunshine. A newly-arrived boat is moored near the quay, displacing the flotilla which opened a little to give it passage. Tugs are getting up steam, and on returning to the town one perceives, above the rigging of the ships, the towers of the churches gracefully bent, like the masts of clipper ships.

The "Neva," which was to take us to St. Petersburg, was composedly loading its boxes and bales and did not seem anything like ready to depart at the appointed time. Indeed it turned out she

would not sail till the day after, a delay that would have annoyed us in a less charming town, but of which we took advantage to go and see Don Juan sung in German by a German troupe. The theatre was quite new and very pretty. The windows in the façade have as supports the Muses arranged as caryatides. We were less pleased by the manner in which Mozart's *chef-d'œuvre* was executed in his own country. The singers were mediocre and permitted themselves strange license, as for example, that of replacing often the *recitatif* by a lively dialogue, doubtless because the music interfered with the action. Leporello laid himself open to charges of execrable taste, and displayed under the nose of the weeping Elvira a roll of paper on which were pasted the portraits of his master's thousand and three victims, and these portraits were all alike, and represented a woman with a head-dress like a giraffe, in the fashion of 1828! Was not that quite delightful?

THE VOYAGE.



## V.

### THE VOYAGE.

THE "Neva" got under way at the appointed hour, moderating her speed to follow the windings of the Trave, whose banks are crowded with charming country houses, the homes of the wealthy inhabitants of Lübeck. As we approached the sea, the river grew wider, the shore sank away, and buoys marked the channel we were to follow. We love these level landscapes. They are more picturesque than is generally believed. A tree, a house, a spire, a sail, looms up with wondrous distinctness, sufficing with the vague background for the *motif* of a picture.

The outline of a great town is drawn on the narrow horizon between the pale blue sky and the pearl-grey sea. It is Travemünde. Then the shores recede more and more, grow indistinct, then disappear. The water around us turns green. Undulations, gentle at first, gradually increase into great waves that toss the foam from their crests. The horizon is blended with the cold blue of the ocean. We are at sea.

The chief aim of marine painters seems to be to make the water transparent, and when they suc-

ceed in so doing the word is applied to them as high praise. But in reality the sea looks heavy, thick, almost solid and opaque. It is not possible for an attentive observer to confound this thick, strong water with a more gentle stream. Doubtless when a sunbeam strikes across a wave, there may be a certain transparency, but the general tone is heavy. The local strength is so great that those parts of the sky which touch it appear colorless. By the depth and intensity of its coloring it proclaims itself a formidable element, an irresistible energy, a prodigious power.

This entrance into the sea produces a certain solemn effect, even upon the most frivolous, the most courageous or those most habituated to it. You leave the land where death, of course, can reach you, but where at least the earth does not open under your feet, to skim across the huge salt plain, the top of an abyss that conceals so many lost ships. You are separated from the boiling chasm but by a thin plank or sheet of iron that a wave could break, a reef tear open. A sudden squall, a change of the wind would suffice to capsize it all, and then your skill as a swimmer would only serve to prolong your agony.

To these grave thoughts is soon added the inexpressible torture of seasickness. It seems as if the incensed element is determined to throw you like some vile thing among its flotsam and jetsam. All will-power disappears, the muscles lose their ten-

sion, the temples are bound with iron, the head is in a whirl of agony, the air grows nauseatingly bitter. The face is livid green, the lips violet, and the color abandons the cheeks for the nose. Everyone then has recourse to his own little remedies. One munches Maltese bonbons, another bites a lemon, a third inhales English salts, another begs for a cup of tea that a sudden pitch or roll sends all over his shirt front, the bravest walk about with tottering gait and chew the end of a cigar they have forgotten to light, almost all end by clinging to some support; happy are those who have presence of mind enough to find one away from the wind.

In the meanwhile the ship continues to go up and down, in ever-increasing measure. If you compare the line of the horizon with the masts and smoke-stack of the steamer you will see a difference in level of a number of yards and your discomfort is augmented. All around you the waves follow one another, swell, toss their foam, are spent. The restless water roars with a giddy noise; masses of it fall on the decks where it is turned into a salt rain, which disappears through the scuppers, after having administered to the passengers a most unexpected bath. The breeze stiffens, the rigging whistles like the cry of a sea-bird. The captain declares that the weather is delicious, to the amazement of the wretched travelers, and orders the jib to be raised, for the wind that was forward has

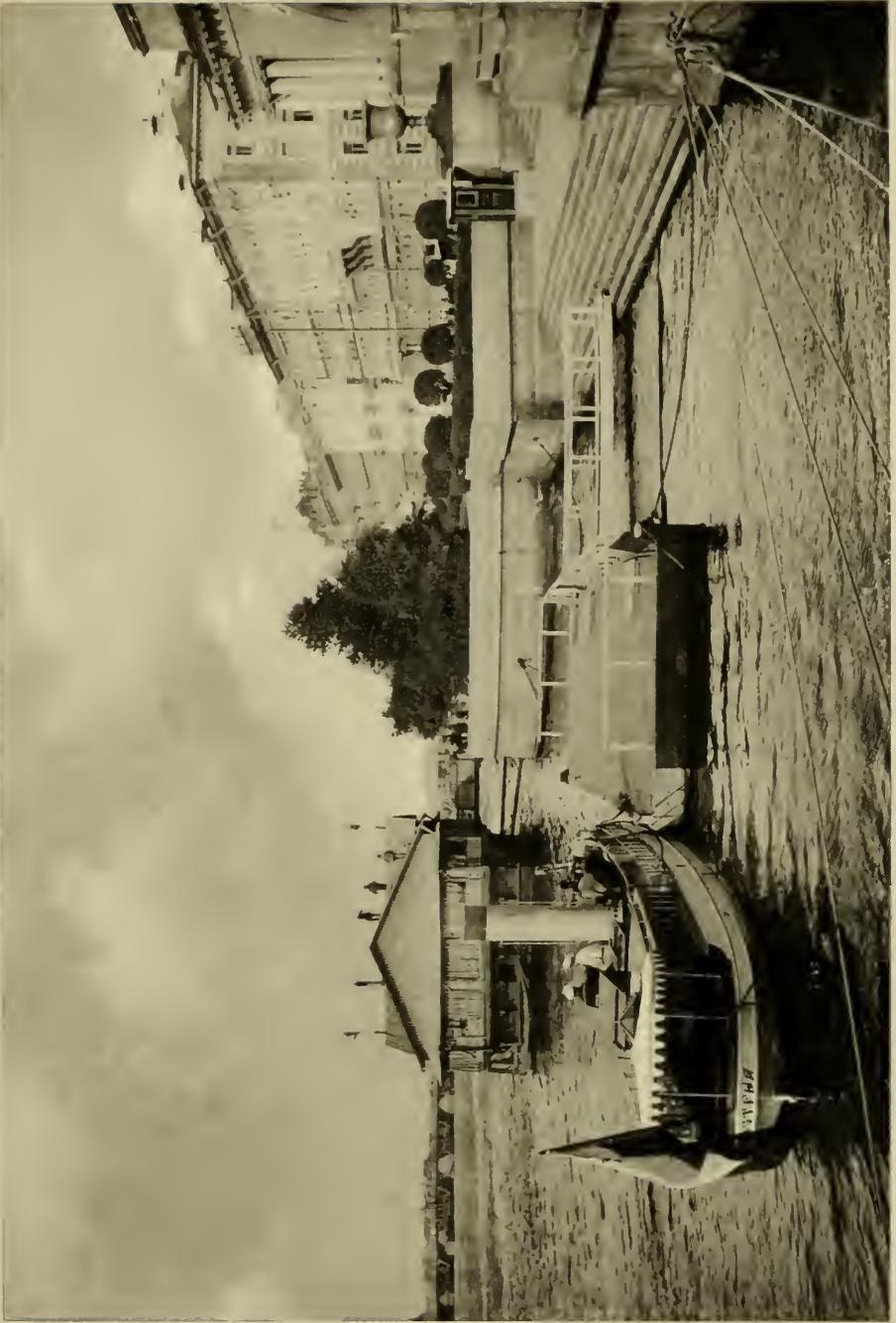
become aft and is blowing now in a favorable direction. Steadied by the jib the ship rolls less and its speed quickens. From time to time brigs and barks pass by, more or less near, their high sails spread, a reef in the lower ones, plunging their noses into the foam, executing pyrotechnics that bring the conviction to the beholder that perhaps the sea is not as good as it has the reputation of being.

In the midst of these thoughts comes the servant to announce that dinner is served. It is by no means an easy operation to go down stairs by a staircase whose steps disappear under your feet like the rounds of the mysterious ladder, in the ordeals of the Free Masons, and whose walls chase you like a game of battledore and shuttlecock. At last you are in your place with a few other braves. The rest, enveloped in their cloaks, are stretched out on the deck. You eat, but with care, at the risk of punching out an eye with your fork, for the ship is dancing merrily. When you attempt to drink, with all the precaution of a rope walker, the liquid plays the rôle of Léon Gozlan's piece—"A tempest in a glass of water." This difficult exercise over, you return to the deck a little on all fours, and the fresh breeze tones you up. You even risk a cigar, it does not taste altogether bad: you are saved! The hostile gods of the ocean will demand no further libations!

While you are walking the deck and keeping your balance with legs and arms, the sun is setting









behind a bank of grey clouds which turn to crimson under his beams and are swept away by the wind. The horizon is deserted, no more ships pass. Under a sky of pale violet the sea grows dark and gloom settles upon it; later the violet turns into steel-blue. The water becomes black, the foam shines upon the crests of the waves like tears of silver upon a funeral cloth. Myriads of golden stars powder the firmament and the comet, spreading its enormous tail, seems eager to dip its head into the ocean. For an instant its tail disappears behind a little passing cloud.

The limpid beauty of the heavens does not prevent the wind from blowing with all its might, and we begin to grow cold. Our clothing is penetrated by the dampness seized by the wind from the crests of the waves. The thought of going into our cabin and breathing the warm, mephitic air of the room gives us nausea, and we rise and seat ourselves by the smoke-stack of the steamer, placing our back against the warm iron under the shelter of the paddle-box. The night was far advanced when we at last sought our berth for a broken sleep haunted by weird dreams.

The next morning the sun rose in dimmed glory, struggling mightily to chase away the curtain of fog. Pale, yellow rays pierced the mist and lighted up the clouds, like the halos around the saints in church. The wind was strong and the vessels that showed themselves occasionally against the horizon

described strange curves. Seeing us stagger about the deck, like a drunken man, the captain, doubtless with the thought of comforting us, called out: "Splendid weather!" His strong German accent gave to his sentence an ironical meaning, at least to our ears.

We went down to breakfast. The plates were steadied by wooden bars, the carafes and bottles were solidly moored, without which precaution everything would have been overturned. In bringing in the dishes the servants executed wonderful gymnastics. They looked like mountebanks balancing chairs on the end of their noses. The weather was, perhaps, not as superb as the captain would have us believe.

Towards evening the sky clouded over and it began to rain, slightly at first, then in torrents; and, according to the proverb: "A little rain lays a big wind," the violence of the wind diminished. Every now and then a lighthouse flashed through the darkness, its brilliant light, either white or red, stationary or rotary, indicating a shore to be avoided. We had entered the gulf.

With daylight, there appeared on the right, low, flat lands, making an almost imperceptible line between the sky and the sea, and seen with difficulty through the mists of the morning and spray of the waves. Sometimes, owing to the sloping of the sea, they entirely disappeared. Only rows of trees seemed to spring from the water. The same thing

was repeated with the houses and lighthouses, whose white towers often blended with sails. On the left, we caught sight of a rocky, barren little island, or at least it seemed so at a distance. The shores were quite gay with ships, and before having recourse to the marine glasses we at first took some sails spread to the rising sun for the fronts of houses. But seen more closely the island was a desert, containing nothing but a lookout placed on a hill. The ocean had grown more quiet, and at dinner there issued from their cabins, like spectres from their tombs, unknown figures of passengers, of whose existence we had no idea. Pale, famished, tottering, they dragged themselves to the side of the table. But all did not succeed in dining. The soup was too stormy, the roast too tempestuous. After a few spoonfuls the most of them rose and fled with uncertain steps towards the staircase of the hatchway.

The third night fell upon the sea. It was to be the last, for on the morrow at eleven o'clock, if nothing retarded the vessel's course, we should be in sight of Cronstadt. We remained late on deck, watching the darkness, pierced here and there with ruddy flashes from the fires of the lighthouse, and devoured with an eager curiosity. After two or three hours' sleep we were again on deck, ahead of the dawn, which remained indolently abed that day, at least so it seemed to us.

Who has not felt the uneasiness that precedes the

hour of dawn? It is damp, chilly and penetrating. Robust people are sensible of a certain vague anxiety, a certain sinking of the heart, and delicate ones feel ready to faint, and every effort becomes a burden. The spirits of darkness, the terrors of night, seem, as they take flight, to touch you with their bat-like wings. Everything disagreeable that has happened comes up in your mind. You regret your home, left of your own accord. But with the first ray of sunshine all is forgotten.

A steamer, dragging after it its long plume of smoke, passes on the right. It is going westward and comes from Cronstadt.

The gulf grows constantly more narrow. Its shores appear at times barren, at times covered with sombre verdure. Lookout towers stand out. Ships, barks, come and go, following the buoy-marked channel. The water, grown more shallow, has changed color near the land, and some seagulls, the first seen, describe graceful evolutions.

In the far distance ahead one sees two pink spots, dashed with black, a gold spangle, a green spangle, some threads as slender as spiders' webs, some columns of white smoke ascending into the air, which is motionless and perfectly pure. It was Cronstadt.

At Paris, during the war, we had seen many plans of greater or less accuracy of Cronstadt with the crossed fires of cannon indicated by lines like the rays of a star, and we had taxed our imagina-

tion to form an idea of the actual aspect of the town. The most detailed plans do not give the least idea of the real outline.

The turn of the wheels, stirring the quiet, almost sluggish water, brought us along rapidly, and already we could clearly distinguish a round fort, with four rows of loopholes, on the left, and on the right a square bastion commanding the pass. The yellow spangle had turned into a golden dome of wonderful beauty and lustre. All the light was concentrated on the upper part, while the parts in shadow assumed amber tones of exquisite delicacy. The green spangle was a cupola painted in that color, which might readily be taken for oxidized copper. A gold dome, a green cupola: Russia, at first sight, shows herself to us under a characteristic coloring.

On a bastion was planted one of those tall signal masts, used so effectively by navies, and behind a granite mole were massed the war ships ready for their winter quarters. A crowd of ships, flying the flags of all nations, filled the port, looking, with their masts and cordage, like a half-stripped forest of pines.

A machine for raising masts, with its beams and pulleys, stood in a corner of the quay, which was covered with cut timber, and in the background rose the houses of the town, gay with different colors, many of the roofs of green but all very low; only the domes of the churches, with their

accompanying cupolas, broke the uniform line. These fortified towns offer the smallest possible resting place to the eye or to cannon. The most delightful result would be that they should not be seen at all, which doubtless will happen sometime.

From a building, with a Greek front, either custom or police house, rowboats were sent out to our steamer which had already cast anchor. It made us think of the "health visits" in the seas of the Levant, where great fellows, much more full of pest than ourselves, breathing through papers saturated with vinegar, examined our papers with the aid of long pinchers. Everybody was on deck, and in a barge that was waiting to take, after the necessary formalities had been accomplished, a traveler to Cronstadt, I espied my first moujik.

He was twenty-eight or thirty, his hair was long and parted in the middle, his beard slightly curled, as one sees in the paintings of Christ. He was well built and easily managed his two oars. He wore a pink shirt fastened at the waist, whose ends hung outside his trousers, like a sort of tunic. His trousers were broad, full of pleats and stuck into his boots. His head-gear consisted of a little flat hat, compressed in the middle, widening at the top with a round brim. This one specimen at once assured us of the fidelity of Yvon's drawings.

Brought by their boats the police and customs employés, dressed in long coats, with the Russian cap, most of them decorated with medallions, as-

cended to the deck and fulfilled the duties of their office with much courtesy.

We had to go down into the saloon to receive back our passports, deposited with the captain, at the moment of departure. There were English, Germans, French, Greeks, Italians and many others. Greatly to our astonishment, the police officer, although a very young man, changed his language with each person, replying in English to the Englishman, German to the German, and so on, without ever mistaking his nationality. Like Cardinal Mai, he seemed to be acquainted with every language. When our turn came he handed us our passport, saying with the purest Parisian accent: "They have been expecting you for a long time in St. Petersburg." In fact we had been imitating the students and taken a month for what could readily have been accomplished in a week. To the passport was attached a three-cornered paper, indicating the formalities to be gone through with on reaching the city of the Tzars.

The steamer resumed its course, and standing on the forward deck, we gazed eagerly at the extraordinary spectacle spread before our eyes. We had entered into the arm of the sea, into which the Neva empties. Its appearance was rather that of a lake than a gulf. As we kept to the middle of the channel, the shores on each side were scarcely discernible. The water, spread out into a large sheet, seemed higher than the land, which was marked by

a tiny line such as is seen in a water-color. The weather was magnificent. A dazzling but cold light fell from a clear sky. It was an azure polar borealis with tints of milk, opal, and steel, of which our sky gives us no conception—a clearness, pure, white, starry, apparently not coming from the sun, but such as one would fancy when a dream carries us to another planet.

Under this opalescent vault the broad expanse of the gulf was brilliant with indescribable colors, among which the ordinary tones of water took no part. Sometimes they were pearl white, like certain shells; sometimes pearl grey, of extraordinary delicacy; farther on flat blues, like Damascus blades, or deep purple reflections, like the film on melted pewter; to a zone of polished glass succeeded a gofferred band of moire-antique; but all so light, so limpid, so graceful, so exquisite, as no palette or tongue could describe. The lightest touch of a human pencil would have been like a spot of mud on this ideal transparency, and the words that we make use of to describe this wonderful light produce the effect of blots of ink falling, from a pen that sputters, on azure tinted vellum. If a boat passed near us, in all the realism of its tones, its salmon-colored masts and every detail clearly outlined, it resembled, in the midst of this elysian blue, a balloon floating in mid-air. One can fancy nothing more fairy-like than this luminous infinitude.

In the distance, between the opalescent water and the mother-of-pearl sky, surrounded with its walled crown, crenelated with towers, there emerged the magnificent silhouette of St. Petersburg, whose tones of amethyst separated with a line of demarcation the pale boundaries of the sea and sky. Gold sparkled in spangles and embroidery on this diadem, the richest, the most glorious ever worn by the front of a city. Soon St. Isaac's showed between its four towers, its cupola gilded like a tiara. The Admiralty flashed its shining spire, the Church of St. Michael-the-Archangel raised its dome in the fashion loved of the Muscovite; that of the Horse Guards displayed its countless little pyramids crowned with crosses and a crowd of more distant bell-towers threw back the light from their shining roofs.

Nothing could be more glorious than this city of gold on the horizon of silver, to which evening contributed the delicious coloring of the dawn.



ST. PETERSBURG.



## VI.

### ST. PETERSBURG.

THE Neva is a beautiful river, about the width of the Thames at London bridge; its course is not long. It rises in Lake Ladoga, which is not far off, and empties into the Gulf of Finland. A few turns of the wheels brought us alongside of a stone pier near which lay at anchor a flotilla of small steamboats, schooners and barks.

On the other side of the river, that is on the right in going up, are immense sheds covering the ships in course of construction. On the left are great palace-like buildings which, we were told, were the naval academy and school of engineers.

It is by no means an easy matter to unload the baggage, trunks, valises, hat-boxes, luggage of all sorts, that encumber the deck of a steamer, at the moment of debarkation and to recognize one's own amid such a confusion. A crowd of moujiks, however, soon carried it all off to the custom house on the pier, followed by the anxious owners.

The most of these moujiks wear a pink shirt outside of their trousers, like a jacket, wide pantaloons and high boots. Others, although the weather was unusually mild, were already wrapped up in

their sheepskin tunics. This "touloupe" is worn with the wool inside, and when it is new, the tanned skin is of a light salmon color, very pleasant to the eye. It is stitched by way of ornament, and is by no means lacking in individuality; but the moujik is as faithful to his touloupe as the Arab to his burnous: once put on, it never leaves him; it is his tent and his bed; he wears it night and day; sleeps with it in any corner, on any bench or on any stove. So before long the garment grows greasy and spotted, assuming those brown tones to which the Spanish painters show so much partiality in their peasants' pictures, but contrary to the models of Ribera and Murillo, the moujik is clean under this dirty covering, for he goes to the public baths once a week. These long-haired, long-bearded men, clothed in the skins of animals, on this magnificent pier, surrounded on all sides by golden domes and golden spires, engross the imagination of the stranger from pure force of contrast. Do not fancy anything fierce or alarming. The faces of these moujiks are gentle and intelligent and their politeness would put to shame the rudeness of our own porters.

The examination of our luggage is made without other incident than the discovery of Balzac's "Les parents pauvres," and Carl Bernhard's "Ailes d'Icare" lying on top of our linen. They were taken possession of and we were told to ask for them

at the Office of Censure, where doubtless they would be returned to us.

These formalities accomplished, we were free to go where our fancy dictated. A multitude of droshkies and little carts for carrying baggage were waiting in front of the custom house, sure of finding customers. We knew perfectly well the name of the place where we had been advised to go, but it was necessary to translate it into Russian for the coachman. One of those *domestiques de place*, who claim no particular language as their own and end by composing a sort of "Frank language," similar to that used by the false Turks in the ceremony of the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," saw our embarrassment, understood that we wished to go to the Hotel de Russie, kept by M. Klee, piled our luggage on a *rospousky*, jumped up himself and we were off. The *rospousky* is a low chariot of most primitive construction, being apparently little more than two roughhewn logs placed on four little wheels.

When one has just left the majestic solitudes of the ocean, the whirlwind of human activity and the noise of a great capital give one a sort of dazed feeling. The traveler passes, as in a dream, by unknown objects, wishing to see everything and seeing nothing. It seems as if the waves were still tossing you, especially when a vehicle of the construction of a *rospousky* rolls and tumbles you over a rough pavement, producing on *terra firma*

the illusion of seasickness. But in spite of our terrible jolting we did not lose a moment, but devoured with our eyes the novel aspects presented to them.

Soon we reached a bridge which we knew later was the Bridge of the Annunciation, or more familiarly the Nicholas Bridge. It is reached by two movable roads which are opened for the passage of boats, so that from the river the bridge looks like a Y with shortened stems. At the point of meeting of these stems is a little chapel of extreme richness, of whose mosaics and gilding we caught a glimpse as we passed.

At the end of the bridge, whose piers are stone and arches iron, the carriage turned and ascended the English quay, along which are palaces with frontals and columns, or private residences of equal splendor, painted in gay colors, with balconies and marquees jutting over the sidewalk. Most of the houses of St. Petersburg, like those of London and Berlin, are built of brick that is rough-coated with plaster of different colors, that produces a charming effect. As we passed we admired behind the glass of the full-length windows, banana trees and tropical plants in bloom in these rooms of the temperature of hothouses.

The English quay ends at the corner of a broad plaza, in which is an equestrian statue of Peter the Great, by Falconet. From the top of a rock, which is used as a pedestal, the great Tzar sits his pranc-



The statue of Peter the Great, which is the most famous monument in St. Petersburg, was erected in 1792. It is a masterpiece of the Russian school of sculpture, and is the work of the artist Ivan Martos. The statue is made of bronze and is 17 feet high. It is the only equestrian statue in Russia.

The statue is the work of the artist Ivan Martos, who was born in 1754 in the village of Martoski, near the town of Martoski. He studied in the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, and was a pupil of the sculptor Johann Gottlieb Schadow. He was a member of the Academy from 1781 to 1792. He was a very successful sculptor, and his works are still admired. The statue of Peter the Great is his most famous work.

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**Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great,  
St. Petersburg**





ing charger, one arm extended towards the Neva. We recognized it at once from the description of Diderot and the drawings we had seen. At the bottom of the square rose the gigantic silhouette of St. Isaac's, with its golden dome, its tiara of columns, its four bell-towers, and its octostyle frontal. At the entrance to a street, on our way back to the English quay, we caught a glimpse of the figures of Victory, with bronze wings, holding palms in their hands, on columns of porphyry. All this, hastily seen as we drove rapidly along, formed a magnificent and Oriental whole that filled us with delighted amazement. As we continued our course in the same direction we soon were before the immense palace of the Admiralty. A square tower in the form of a temple, ornamented with little columns placed on its top, supported that slender, golden spire with a ship for a weathercock, that we had seen so far off, which had indeed caught our attention in the Gulf of Finland. Avenues of trees, stretching in every direction from the building, had not yet lost their leaves, although the autumn was well advanced—(10th of October).

Further on, in the middle of another square, on its base of brass, rose the column of Alexander, an enormous monolith of pink granite, surmounted by an angel holding a cross. We only caught a glimpse of it as the carriage turned and entered the Nevsky Prospect, which is to St. Petersburg what the Rue de Rivoli is to Paris, Regent Street

to London, the Calle de Alcalá to Madrid, The Toledo to Naples, that is to say, the principal artery of the city, the most crowded and popular spot.

What struck us more than anything else was the immense number of carriages—and a Parisian is not easily astonished in this respect—which were in this street, and especially the extreme speed of the horses. The droskies are, as everyone knows, little, low, light phaetons which, at the most, hold but two persons. They go like the wind, driven by coachmen who are both skillful and daring. They grazed our rospousky with the swiftness of swallows, crossed each other, passed by, went from the wooden to the stone pavement without ever touching each other. Blockades, to all appearances inextricable, were dissolved as if by enchantment, and each one went on his own side and found a place for his wheels where one would have thought a wheelbarrow could not have passed.

The Nevsky Prospect is at the same time the shopping street and the beautiful street of St. Petersburg. The shops rent for as high prices there as on the Boulevard des Italiens. Shops, palaces and churches are mingled together in a most original manner. On the signs shine in gold the beautiful characters of the Russian alphabet, which has retained certain Greek letters, whose statuesque forms lend themselves readily to inscription.

All this passed before our eyes like a dream, for the respousky was going very fast, and before we knew where we were, we were mounting the steps of the Hotel de Russie, whose landlord scolded roundly the *domestique de place* for having placed our high mightiness in so wretched a vehicle. The Hotel de Russie, situated at the corner of the Place Michael near the Nevsky Prospect, is fully as large as the Hotel du Louvre in Paris. Its corridors are longer than many a street, so that it is quite a walk to go through them. The lower floor is occupied by large dining-rooms, which are decorated with hothouse plants. In the first room, on a sort of buffet, are laid out caviar, herrings, sandwiches of white and brown bread, cheese of several kinds, bottles of bitters, kummel, and brandy, served in the Russian fashion to tempt the appetite of the consumer. The *hors d'œuvre* is eaten here before the repast, and we have traveled too much to feel any astonishment at this custom. Every country has its own ways. In Sweden, do they not bring the soup with the dessert?

At the entrance of this room was a coat rack surrounded by an enclosure, where everyone hung his overcoat, his nose-protector, his plaid, and also put his rubber shoes. And yet it was not cold, and the thermometer marked in the open forty-eight or fifty degrees. These extraordinary precautions, in so mild a temperature amazed us, and we looked outside to see if the snow was already whitening

the roofs, but the feeble light of the setting sun alone colored them.

And yet double windows were placed everywhere. Great piles of wood filled the courtyard, and they were preparing to receive winter in fine shape. Our bedchamber was also hermetically sealed. Sand was spread between the sashes in which were planted little horns full of salt, meant to absorb the dampness and prevent the formation of frost flowers, for without this precaution the cold would crack the glass. Registers were all ready to pour forth their volume of heated air. But winter was late, and the double sashes kept the room very pleasantly warm. The furniture was in no way at all remarkable, except for one of those immense sofas in pressed leather, that are seen everywhere in Russia, and which, with their numerous pillows, are more comfortable than the beds, which indeed are usually very bad.

After dinner we went out without a guide, as we always do, trusting to our bump of locality to bring us back home. A big clock at one corner, and a watch-tower at another ought to serve as landmarks.

This first stroll at hazard, through an unknown and long-dreamed of city, is one of the greatest delights of the traveler, which pays him with interest for the fatigues of the journey. Is it too much to add that the night, with its shadows mingled with light, its mystery, and fantastic

forms, greatly increases this delight? The eye catches a glimpse, and the fancy finishes. The reality of things is not portrayed too strongly, and objects group themselves in large masses like a picture that the artist means to finish later.

Here we are then, sauntering along the sidewalk slowly, on our way down the Prospect towards the Admiralty.

Sometimes we looked at the passers-by, sometimes at the brilliantly lighted shops, or we peered into the basements, which recalled the cellars of Berlin or the "tunnels" of Hamburg. At every step we saw exquisite fruits, artistically arranged in the handsome shop windows—pineapples, grapes from Portugal, lemons, pomegranates, pears, apples, plums, watermelons. The love of fruit is as universal in Russia as that of bonbons in Germany. Fruit is very dear, which makes it even more highly prized. On the sidewalks, moujiks offered green, sour-looking apples for sale, and they seemed to find purchasers. There were piles of the fruit at every corner.

This first examination finished, we returned to the hotel. If children need to be rocked to sleep, men prefer motionless slumber, and for three nights the sea had rocked us enough in our steam cradle to make us long for a stable bed. But across our dreams the undulations of the waves made themselves felt. We had experienced this strange sensation several times. The ever-blessed

dry land, so highly appreciated by Panurge, is not as prompt a remedy as is generally believed for the wretchedness caused by the moving surface of the liquid plain.

The next day we were out betimes to see by daylight the picture half divined the evening before by the uncertain light of twilight and night. Since the Nevsky Prospect is to a certain extent an epitome of St. Petersburg, you will pardon me if I give a rather long and detailed description of it, which will at once make you conversant with the city. Please pardon some remarks that may seem puerile and tedious. It is just these little things, generally neglected as too humble and unworthy of observation, which constitute the difference between one place and another, making you sensible that you are not in the Rue Vivienne or Piccadilly. The Nevsky Prospect starts from the square of the Admiralty and runs for a long distance, as far as the St. Alexander Nevsky Convent, where it ends with a slight curve. The street is wide, as is the case with all streets in St. Petersburg. The middle of the street has been paved rather roughly, and the two sides slope towards the middle where, at their intersection, is the gutter. On each side a strip of wooden pavement borders the granite stones. The sidewalk is paved with flags.

The spire of the Admiralty, which resembles the mast of a golden ship planted on the roof of a Grecian temple, forms, when seen from the end of

the Prospect, a point of view that has been managed with exquisite skill.

The smallest ray of sunshine is focused into a brilliant point of light on it, and catches the eye as far as it can be seen. Two neighboring streets enjoy the same advantage and by means of a skillful arrangement of lines can also enjoy a view of the golden spire. But for the moment let us turn our back on the Admiralty and ascend the Prospect as far as the Anitschkov bridge that is in the most animated and crowded part. The houses on either side are lofty and large, with the appearance of palaces or hotels. Some of the oldest recall the ancient Italianized-French style with a mingling of Mansart and Bernini that is full of dignity. Corinthian pilasters, cornices, windows with frontals, consoles, voluted *œil-de-bœufs*, pillared doors, the ground floor all carved and sculptured on a foundation of pink rough plaster. Others are in the style of Louis XV., shell work, and gewgaws of various kinds, while the Greek taste of the Empire lifts its colonnades and triangular frontals in white on a yellow background.

The modern houses are in the Anglo-German style, and seem to have taken as a model those magnificent hotels at seaside resorts, pictures of which enchant all travelers. But it is not well to study the details too closely, for the use of stone alone gives value to the execution, or the ornamentation, by preserving the direct impress of the

artist. The whole, as we were saying, forms an admirable *coup d'œil*, making the name of Prospect, that this street bears, as well as many others of St. Petersburg, seem wonderfully fitting and just. Everything is combined to impress the eye; and the city, created in a moment by a will that knew no obstacle, sprang ready-finished from the marshes underneath, like a decoration of the theatre at the whistle of the mechanician. If the Nevsky Prospect is beautiful, let us hasten to say it enjoys its beauty. Fashionable and full of shops, it alternates the one and the other. Nowhere else, unless it may be Berne, do signs display such luxury. To such a point of perfection is this art carried that it must almost be admitted as an order of modern architecture, and added to the five orders of Vignole. Gold letters are boldly placed on fields of azure, on black or crimson panels, are applied to the front windows, are repeated at every door, take advantage of the corners of the street, cling in curves to round places, stretch along the cornices, utilize the projections of the marquees, descend the stairs to the basement, and seek by every possible means to attract the attention of the passer-by.

But perhaps you do not understand Russian, and the form of these letters means nothing more to you than the drawing of an ornament or a piece of embroidery. Here alongside is the French or German translation. Still you do not understand.

The complaisant sign pardons you for your ignorance in these three languages; it even supposes the case that you are utterly uneducated, and it gives the natural form of the object which is offered in the shop it announces. Golden bunches of grapes, carved or painted, indicate the wine merchant. Further on hams, sausages, beeves' tongues, boxes of caviar point out a shop for eatables. Boots, slippers, rubber shoes, most realistically painted, say to the feet that cannot read: "Enter, and you will be shod." Gloves crossed over each other, speak a language intelligible to all. There are also women's cloaks and gowns, surmounted by a hat or bonnet, to which the artist has not judged it necessary to add the figure. Pianos invite you to try their painted key-boards. It all is very amusing to the loiterer and possesses its own individuality.

The first thing that attracts the attention of a Parisian on entering the Nevsky Prospect is the name of the print-seller, Daziaro, whose Russian sign he has already seen on the Boulevard des Italiens. In ascending to the right he will stop at the shop of Beggrow, the Desforges of St. Petersburg, who sells colors, and has always exposed in his window a water-color or oil painting.

Numerous canals intersect the city, which is built on twelve little islands like a northern Venice. Three of these canals cross the Nevsky Prospect, but without breaking its continuity, the

Moïka canal, the Catherine, and further on, the Ligovka and Fontanka canal. The Moïka is crossed by the Police Bridge, whose ascent is so steep that it arrests for a moment the rapid pace of the droskies. The Kasan bridge and the Anitschkov bridge span the two other canals. When one passes over these bridges before the winter comes one is filled with a strange pleasure in gazing at the opening made in the midst of the houses by these waters kept in check by great stone walls and covered with boats.

Lessing, the author of "Nathan, the Wise," would have loved the Nevsky Prospect, for his ideas of religious tolerance would have been put in practice in the most liberal manner. There is scarcely a communion that has not its church or temple on this broad street, exercising its religion in perfect liberty.

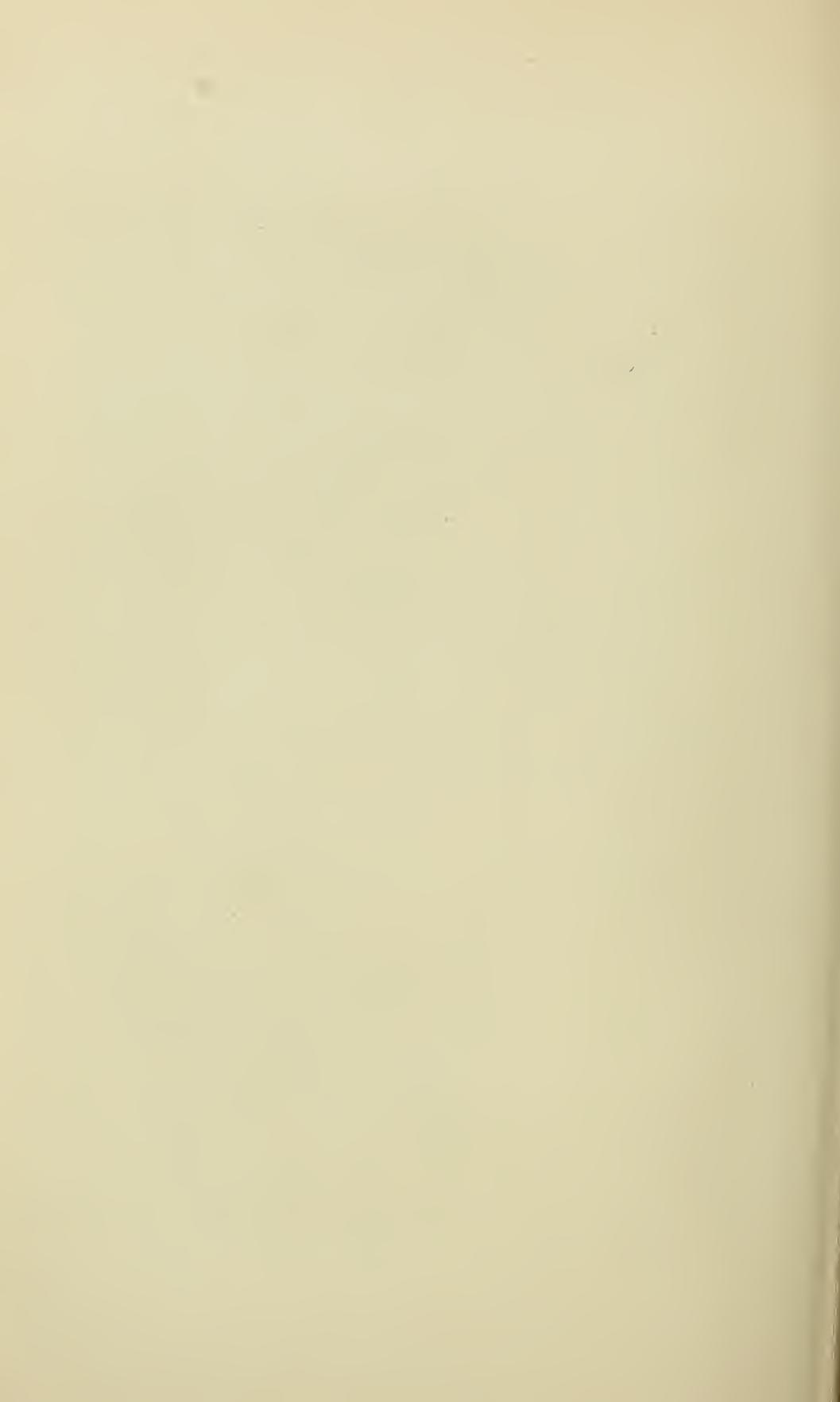
On the left, as we are walking, is the Dutch church, the Lutheran temple of St. Peter, the Catholic church of St. Catherine, an Armenian church, without counting in the adjacent streets, the Finnish chapel, and the temples of other reformed sects. On the right is the Russian Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan, another Greek church, and a chapel of the old religion, called Starovertzi or Raskolniki.

All these houses of God, except Our Lady of Kazan, which breaks the line by the formation of a great Plaza where is built its superb semicircular









portico, imitated from the colonnade of St. Peter's at Rome, are mingled familiarly with the houses of men. Their façades are set back a little, but they offer themselves without pretence of mystery to the piety of the passer-by, and are recognized by their style of architecture. Each church is surrounded by a broad piece of land, conceded by the Tzars, but the ground is now covered with rich manufactories that have rented it.

Keeping on our way, we reach the tower of Douma, a sort of watch-tower for fires, like the tower of Seraskier in Constantinople. On its top is placed an apparatus for signalling, in which red or black balls indicate the street where the fire is.

Quite near, on the same side, is the Gostiny-Dvor, a great, square building, with two rows of galleries, which looks something like the Palais Royal, and encloses shops of all sorts, filled with every luxury. Next comes the Imperial Library, with its curved façade and Ionic columns. Then the Anitschkov palace, that gives its name to the adjacent bridge, ornamented with four bronze horses held in check by grooms, and prancing on their stone pedestals.

Here the Nevsky Prospect ends; but, do you say, "there is no one in your picture? It is like those poor things that the Turkish scribblers make." Please, I beg, wait a moment. We are going now to fill your view with animation and people. The

writer, less fortunate than the painter, can only present objects one at a time.

We have promised to put people in our Nevsky Prospect. Let us try to sketch them ourselves, not having, like the architects, the resource of borrowing a pencil more graphic than our own and writing at the base "Figures of Duruy or of Bayot."

It is from one to three o'clock that the crowd is the greatest. Besides those who are attending to their business affairs and who walk rapidly, there are loungers, whose only end is to see, to be seen and to take a little exercise. Their coupés or droskies meet them at a given point, or even follow them slowly as they walk along, in case they should desire to use them at any moment.

First you will notice the officers of the Guard, in grey mantles with a mark on the shoulder to indicate their rank. Their breasts are nearly always starred with decorations, and they wear caps on their heads. Next come the tchinovniks (Government officials), in long overcoats pleated at the back and drawn in by a belt. Instead of a hat they wear a dark cap with a cockade. Young men, who are neither officers nor officials, wear coats trimmed with fur, whose price fills the stranger with astonishment, going beyond the wildest dreams of our exquisites. These overcoats are made of cloth of the finest quality, and lined with marten or muskrat and have sable collars, costing from one hundred to three hundred roubles, ac-

ording to the manner in which the skin is finished, to its depth and richness of color, and if it has white hairs longer than the rest of the fur. A coat costing a thousand roubles is no unusual thing, and frequently they are worth much more. It is a luxury unknown with us. At St. Petersburg the proverb "Tell me who are your friends, and I will tell you what you are," might be changed into this northern variation: "Tell me about your furs, and I will tell you what you are worth." One is judged by one's furs.

What! you are probably thinking as you read this description, furs in the commencement of October, in weather that is exceptionally mild, that must seem to these men of the North like spring! Yes, the Russians are not at all what many people fancy them to be—hardened by their climate till they rejoice like white bears in ice and snow. Nothing is farther from the truth. They are, on the contrary, very chilly and take precautions to guard against the least inclemency that strangers at first neglect, though they adopt them later—after they have been ill. If you see anyone pass lightly clothed, by his olive skin, his thick, black beard, you may be sure he is an Italian, a Southerner, whose blood has not yet been chilled. Take your wadded overcoat, put on your rubber shoes, envelop your throat in a nose protector, do you say? But the thermometer marks forty-six or forty-seven degrees. Never mind, there is here, as in Madrid, a

little wind that would not blow out a candle but will extinguish a man. We used to put on a cloak in Madrid when it was fifty degrees. We certainly have no reason for not using a winter overcoat in the autumn at St. Petersburg. It is best to believe in the wisdom of the nation itself. The overcoat, then, lined with light fur, is for the half season. At the first fall of snow people wrap themselves up in their pelisses, not to take them off till the month of May.

If the Venetian women never go out but in a gondola, the women of St. Petersburg never go out but in a carriage. They scarcely ever leave it even for a little walk on the Prospect. They have adopted the hats and fashions of Paris. Blue seems to be their favorite color. It goes well with their fair complexions and blonde hair. Of the elegance of their figures, one cannot judge, at least in the street, for wide pelisses of black satin or Scotch plaids envelop them from head to foot. Coquetry here gives way to climatic considerations, and the most beautiful feet are ruthlessly shod in enormous boots. The Andalusian woman would rather die; but in St. Petersburg this sentence, "take cold," is a sufficient answer for everything. These cloaks are trimmed with *zibeline*, marten, with Siberian blue fox, and other furs, of whose extravagant prices we Westerners have no idea. The luxury in this matter is unheard of, and if the rigor of the climate allowed the women to wear

but a shapeless bag, you may be sure this bag would cost as much as the most splendid toilettes.

After fifty steps, the beautiful, indolent creatures return to their coupés or calèches to pay visits or return home.

Of course, all this has reference to society women, that is to the women of the nobility. The others, even if as rich, or as beautiful, are more humble in their manners—rank sets the seal. These who are now passing are Germans, wives of merchants, distinguishable by their Teutonic type, their air of gentle dreaminess, their neat, but simple clothes. They wear talmas, with short skirts, or long-haired cloth mantles. And these are French women in conspicuous toilettes, a velvet coat, a hat covering the whole top of the head, which here on the pavement of the Nevsky Prospect carries one back to the Mabilles or Folies-Nouvelles.

Strictly speaking, so far, you could very well believe you were on the Boulevard! A little patience, please. You are going to be shown the Russian types. Look at this man in a blue caftan, buttoned on one side of the breast like a Chinese dress, gathered over the hips in symmetrical folds and exquisitely clean. A flat-crowned hat with a visor, low on his forehead, completes his costume. He is an artelchtchik, or merchant's servant. His hair and his beard are both parted in the middle. His face is honest and intelligent. To him are trusted

the payments, the demands and the commissions, which require honesty.

At the very moment that you are bewailing the absence of the picturesque there passes by your side a nurse in the ancient, national costume. On her head is the povoinik, a sort of toque in the shape of a diadem, of red or blue velvet, embroidered with gold. The povoinik is open or closed. Open, it means a young girl; closed, a married woman. That of the nurses has a top and their hair comes out from underneath in two plaits that hang down the back. Maidens have but a single plait. The dress is of wadded damask, with the waist under the arms, and a short tunic-like skirt, disclosing a second one of less richness. This tunic is red or blue, like the povoinik with a broad, gold band on the edge. This purely Russian costume possesses both style and dignity when worn by a handsome woman. The great gala costume, in the court fêtes, is taken from this design; and rustling with gold and studded with diamonds, it contributes no small share to their splendor.

In Spain, too, it is considered a point of elegance to have a nurse wearing the costume of her *pasiega*, and we used to admire these beautiful peasant women on the Prado or Calle de Alcalá, with their jackets of black velvet and their scarlet skirts, with their bands of gold. One might think that civilization, becoming sensible of the gradual effacement of the national *cachet*, desires to im-

press its memory upon its children, and so brings from the depths of the country a woman in ancient costume who is the image of the mother-country.

And apropos of nurses, let us talk of the children. The transition is quite natural. The Russian babies are very sweet in their little blue caftans and their flat hats decorated by a peacock's feather.

Dvornicks, or *concierges*, are constantly at work on their pavements, sweeping in summer and taking away the ice in winter. They are very rarely in their lodges, if lodges they have in the sense which we give to the word. They stay up all night; have no thought of a bell and open the door, when a person first calls. For they think, extraordinary as it may seem, that a porter is made to open the door at three in the morning as much as at three in the afternoon. They sleep as they can, and never undress. They wear blue shirts outside their trousers, wide, short trousers, and heavy boots—a dress which they change with the first cold weather for the invariable sheepskin.

From time to time a boy with an apron tied around his waist issues from a shop, walks rapidly up the street and enters a house or shop. It is an apprentice sent by his master on an errand.

The picture would be incomplete were we not to mention several dozen moujiks, their touloupes spotted with dirt and grease, who sell apples and cakes, bring provisions in their karzines (baskets

of plaited fir shavings) mend with their axes the wooden pavement, or in groups of five or six carry with measured tread a piano, a table or a sofa upon their heads.

One rarely ever sees the moujik women; either they stay at home on the lands of their masters, or they are occupied in domestic labor. Those that one sees from a distance have nothing worthy of mention in their appearance. A handkerchief, tied under the chin, covers their heads. A wadded cloak, of common material, of neutral color and doubtful cleanliness, reaches to the knee, disclosing a cotton skirt with felt stockings and wooden shoes. They are by no means pretty, but look sad and gentle. No flash of envy brightens their eyes at the sight of a beautiful, well-dressed lady, and coquetry is apparently unknown to them. They accept their inferiority, which is more than any woman with us would do, no matter how humble might be her position in the social scale.

Then, too, one is struck with the small number of women, proportionally, in the streets of St. Petersburg. As in the East, the men, alone, seem to have the privilege of going out. In Germany it is quite the contrary, for there the female portion of the population is always out.

But as yet we have only peopled the sidewalks with figures. The middle of the street does not present a less animated and vivid spectacle. A perpetual stream of carriages pours down it at









full speed, and to cross the Prospect is an operation not less perilous than to cut across the Boulevard in Paris. People walk very little in St. Petersburg, taking a drosky for even a few steps. A carriage is not considered here as an object of luxury, but as of the first necessity. Small merchants and clerks on little salaries economize in many ways, even pinch themselves that they may have a careta, drosky, or a sleigh. To go on foot, implies a sort of dishonor. A Russian without a carriage is like an Arab without a horse. His nobility would even be doubted, and he might be taken for a mechanic or a serf.

The drosky is, *par excellence*, the national carriage. There is nothing analogous to it in any country, and it is quite deserving of a description. Here is one, which is waiting, drawn up by the sidewalk, while its master is paying a visit, and which seems placed for our especial benefit. It is a fashionable drosky belonging to a young noble who is a judge of carriages.

The drosky is a small, low, open, four-wheeled carriage, of which the back wheels are not larger than those of a victoria; those in front, than the wheel of a wheelbarrow. Four round rings support the body, which is divided into two seats, one for the coachman, the other for the owner. This last seat is round, and in elegant droskies is called an "egotist," because only one person can sit in it. In others there are two places, but so narrow that

one is obliged to pass one's arm around one's neighbor, whether male or female. On each side are bands of varnished leather which pass over the wheels and serve the double purpose of protecting the inmate from the mud and affording a step that is but a few inches from the ground. Under the coachman's seat is the swingletree and there are no patented boxes on the wheels, the reason we will tell in describing the mode of harnessing.

The color of the drosky varies. Sometimes it is jet black picked out in light blue, or Russian green, with apple-green facings. But no matter what tint is chosen, the body color remains dark.

The seat is of pressed leather or dark cloth, and a Persian or moquette rug is under the feet. There are no lamps to a drosky, and it flies about at night without two stars in front. It is for the passer-by to be careful and for the coachman to cry: "Look out!"

Nothing could be prettier, lighter or more delicate than this little equipage that could be carried under one's arm. It might have issued from the carriage shop of Queen Mab.

Harnessed to this nutshell, with which it could easily jump over a fence, a magnificent horse, which has probably cost six thousand roubles, paws the ground with nervous impatience—a horse of the famous Orlov breed, of rich iron-grey, with a superb mane and tail powdered with flashes of silver. He stamps, tosses his head, prances about

and is with difficulty held in check by a powerful coachman. He stands bare in the shafts, no harness preventing us from admiring his beauty. Some light leather cords, scarcely a half inch in width, caught here and there by silver or gold ornaments, adorn without annoying or covering him or hiding the perfection of his form.

The mountings of the head-piece flash with little metal scales, and it is quite free from those heavy, black blinders which hide the most beautiful part of a horse, his flashing, dilating eyes.

Two little silver chains cross gracefully over the forehead. The bit is covered with leather, for fear the cold iron may injure the delicacy of the mouth, for a simple bit is sufficient to guide the noble beast. The collar which is very light and simple, is the only part of the harness that attaches the horse to the carriage, for a Russian harness has no traces. The collar is joined directly to the shafts, fastened by straps wrapped round several times, but without buckles, rings or any metal attachment. At the point of junction of the collar and shafts, are fastened by means of the same straps, the cords of a flexible wooden arch which rises over the shoulders of the horse, like the handle of a basket, drawn in at the ends. This arch, called the douga, bent slightly backwards, serves to hold the collar and shafts in such a manner that they shall not hurt the horse, and also to suspend the reins from a hook.

The shafts are not attached to the body of the drosky, but to the axle of the front wheels, which passes beyond the hubs, passing through them, and are kept in place by an exterior pin. For greater solidity a trace placed outside is fastened by straps to the collar.

This manner of harnessing allows the front part to turn easily, the traction operating on the ends of the axles like a lever.

Such is a description, very minute without doubt, of the drosky, but vague descriptions do not amount to anything, and perchance the sportsmen of Paris or London may not be sorry to know how the drosky of a St. Petersburg sportsman is made and harnessed.

But we have said nothing of the coachman, and a Russian coachman is a very characteristic personage, full of local coloring. On his head is a low hat with a bulging crown, and a brim turned up at the sides and sloping down over the forehead and neck. He wears a long, blue or green blouse, closed under the left arm by hooks or silver buttons and pleated around the hips and fastened at the waist by a Circassian belt embroidered with gold, his muscular throat encircled by a cravat, his long beard falling over his breast, his arms held out straight, a rein in each hand, and it must be acknowledged he presents a magnificent, triumphal appearance, that he is indeed the coachman of his equipage. The bigger he is, the higher

his wages; entering into your service thin, he demands increase of wages as he increases in flesh.

As they drive with both hands, the use of the whip is unknown. The horses increase or lessen their speed by the sound of the voice. Like the Spanish muleteers, the Russian drivers address compliments or invectives to their animals. Sometimes they are diminutives of charming tenderness; sometimes horribly picturesque insults, that modern modesty forbids us to translate. President de Brosse would not have failed to have done so. If the animal goes too slow or makes a false step, a little blow with the reins on his back suffices to hurry or help him. The drivers warn you to take care by calling, "Bériguiss! bériguiss!" If you do not obey the injunction quickly enough they say, with increased accentuation: "Bériguiss!—sta—eh!" It is a point of honor with coachmen of good houses never to raise their voices.

But just here the young lord steps into his carriage. The horse starts off at a brisk trot, stepping high as if he would like to dance, though his coquetry of gait does not impede his swiftness.

Sometimes another horse is harnessed to a drosky, and is called "pristiaska," which may be translated as a "wheeler." He is guided by an outside rein and gallops, while his companion trots. The difficulty is to keep the two gaits equal, yet dissimilar. This horse, which looks as if he were gamboling along with the equipage, accompanying

his comrade for his own pleasure, imparts a gaiety, freedom and grace to the turnout that is seen nowhere else.

The hired droskies are exactly like the others, except for the elegance of their shape and manufacture, and the freshness of their paint. They are even driven by a coachman, in a more or less clean blue blouse, who has his number stamped on a copper plate, and suspended from his neck by a leathern cord, which he always throws behind him, so that his customer may have his number before his eyes and not forget it. The harness is the same, and the little horse from the Ukraine, although not of such fine stock, does not, on that account, go less fast. There is also a long drosky, which is the oldest and most national. It is nothing more than a bench covered with cloth carried on four wheels, across which one must sit astride unless one desires to sit sideways, as in a woman's saddle. The droskies wander about or wait at the corner of the streets or squares, before wooden troughs, supported by a hollow foot, that are receptacles for oats or hay for the horses. At any hour of the day or night, in any place in St. Petersburg, one needs to call but two or three times, "Isvochtchik!" and a little carriage, from Heaven knows where, will come galloping up.

The coupés, berlins, calèches, which are always ascending or descending the Prospect have nothing unusual about them, and are generally of English

or Viennese manufacture. Very frequently magnificent horses are harnessed to them, which go at a great rate. The drivers wear the blouse, and sometimes by them are seated military-looking personages with a copper helmet terminating in a ball, instead of the flame that forms the top of the soldier's crests. These men wear a grey mantle, with a red or blue collar, according to the rank of their colonel or general master. The privilege of having a chasseur belongs only to the carriages of ambassadors. Here is an equipage with four horses, the wheeler is mounted by an outrider in ancient livery, holding a great whip straight up. It is the metropolitan, and when he passes everyone bows.

Amid this whirlwind of fine carriages are mingled chariots of exceedingly primitive construction. The most ignorant rusticity rubs against the highest civilization. In Russia this contrast is by no means unusual. Rospouskys, made of two logs placed on axles, whose wheels are held up by pieces of wood running through the center and coming out at the sides of the rude vehicle, graze the swift calèche shining with varnish. The principle of the harness is the same as with the drosky. Only a larger rim, queerly painted, replaces the delicate curve of the light wheel. Cords are substituted for the fine leather reins, and a moujik in sheepskin is crouched among the bales and bundles. As for the horse, all bristling with a coat that has

never known a currycomb, he shakes, as he walks, his dishevelled mane which almost touches the ground. It is with the aid of these vehicles that people move. They are enlarged by planks, and the furniture goes along, with its legs in the air, fastened down with ropes. Further, a hay rick seems to be walking of its own volition, drawn by a horse that is well-nigh buried. A tub full of water is being carried by the same process. A *téléga* passes in great haste, without troubling itself about the jolts it inflicts on the officer carried on its springless boards. Where is it going? Five or six hundred versts—further still, perhaps to the outmost confines of the Empire, to the Caucasus or Thibet. Never mind! But you may be sure of one thing, that the light cart (it is not deserving of any other name) will be pushed always at full speed. So that the two front wheels, with the seat, arrive at their destination, it will be enough.

Look at this chariot which looks exactly like a trough on wheels. Behind it is a long pole, separating like the side of a box the two horses attached to the body, which thus have no need of grooms. Nothing could be simpler or more convenient.

Those heavy carts, that are moved with difficulty by five or six horses urged by the whip of a brutal driver, are never seen in St. Petersburg. Here the horses carry light loads, but are expected to go very rapidly; and they are swift rather than

strong. All heavy objects, which can be divided, are distributed among several wagons instead of being piled up in a single one, as with us. They go in companies, and their union forms caravans that recall, in the midst of the town, the traveling customs of the desert.

Every civilized city must have omnibuses. Some, to which three horses are harnessed, go about the Nevsky Prospect, coming from distant quarters. But the droskies are generally preferred, for they cost very little more and take you wherever you want to go. The long drosky costs fifteen kopecks the course; the round drosky, twenty—something like twelve or sixteen cents. It is not high. One must be either very miserly, or very poor, to walk.

But the twilight falls, the pedestrians, urged by visions of dinner, quicken their steps; the carriages disappear, and the luminous ball is raised on the watch-tower, which is the signal for lighting the gas. Let us, too, go home.



WINTER—THE NEVA.



## VII.

### WINTER—THE NEVA.

FOR several days it has been growing perceptibly colder. Every night it freezes, and the north-east wind has swept the last crimson, autumn leaves in the square of the Admiralty. Winter, though late for this climate, has started on its way from the polar regions, announcing its approach by the chill that has enveloped everything around us. Nervous people feel that vague discomfort caused to nervous organizations by snow suspended in the air, and the *isvochtchiks*, who are quite without nerves but possess as a compensation an atmospheric instinct as infallible as an animal's, lift their noses towards the sky, covered with an immense yellow-grey cloud, and joyously make ready their sleighs. But still the snow did not come, and people made critical observations on the temperature, but in a totally different vein from that in which Philistines of other lands indulge when talking of their native air. In St. Petersburg people complained that the weather was not severe enough, and looking at the thermometer would say: "What! it is only two or three degrees above zero! Decidedly the climate is changing!" And old

people tell you of those beautiful winters, when they ENJOYED thirty-five degrees below zero from the month of October to the month of May.

But one morning, on raising the blind, we perceived through the double window sashes, damp with the night-frost, a roof of dazzling whiteness standing out from a sky of light blue, while the rising sun turned into gold some delicate clouds and spirals of smoke. The projections of the palace opposite were enriched with silver lines, like those drawings on colored paper, heightened with touches of white paint, and over the ground there was spread a thick layer of virgin snow, imprinted only as yet by the pointed toes of pigeons, as numerous in St. Petersburg as in Constantinople or Venice. The flock, dotting with grey-blue the background of immaculate whiteness, circled about, flapping their wings, apparently in greater impatience than was their wont, before the basement shop of a provision merchant, for the distribution of grain which he made every morning with a charity worthy of a Brahman. Indeed, although the snow looked like a tablecloth, the birds did not find it set for them, and the ring-doves were hungry. You may fancy their delight when at last the merchant opened his door. The winged band flew lovingly to him, and for an instant he disappeared in a feathered cloud. Some handfuls of grain thrown at a distance restored him his liberty, and standing on his doorsill he smiled at

the sight of his little friends enjoying their breakfast with so much eagerness, scattering the snow to right and left the while. You may imagine that certain uninvited sparrows profited by the windfall, shameless parasites that they are, and did not allow the crumbs of the feast to fall to the ground. But, then, everyone must live!

The city began to wake up. Moujiks in quest of provisions, their pine baskets on their heads, plunged their great boots into the untrodden snow, leaving marks like elephants' feet. Some women, a handkerchief tied under the chin, wrapped in their cloaks, crossed the street lightly, gathering, as they went, a band of silver embroidery on the hem of their skirts. Gentlemen in long mantles, their collars turned up over their ears, passed along gaily on their way to their offices; and suddenly there appeared the first sleigh, driven by Winter in person, under the form of an *isvochtchik*. On his head was a bonnet of red velvet, with four skirts edged with fur, dressed in a blue blouse lined with sheepskin, and his knees were covered with an old bearskin. While awaiting a customer he was taking it comfortably on the back seat of his sleigh and guiding across the front seat, with hands immersed in great gloves, whose thumb alone was separated, his little Kazan horse, whose long mane well-nigh swept the snow. Never, since our arrival in Russia, had we felt so distinctly the sensation of being in Russia. It was like a sud-

den revelation, and in a flash we understood many things that heretofore had been obscure to us.

As soon as we saw the snow we began to dress hastily. At the sight of the sleigh we put on our pelisse, thrust our feet in galoches, and in a minute we were in the street, crying with all our might: "Isvochtchik! Isvochtchik!"

The sleigh came up to the sidewalk, the isvochtchik stepped over his seat, and we ensconced ourselves in the back, which was full of hay, drew together the skirts of our pelisse and pulled the cover of skin over us. The construction of the sleigh is very simple. Imagine two bars or runners of polished iron, whose front end turns up like the point of a Chinese shoe. On these bars a light iron joint fastens the seats for the passenger and driver. This box is usually painted mahogany color. A dashboard that swells out and turns like the neck of a swan gives grace to the sleigh and protects the isvochtchik against the particles of snow that fly like silver foam about this delicate, swift equipage. The shafts fit into the collar as in the harness of the drosky, and the traction comes upon the runners. The whole affair weighs nothing and goes like the wind, especially when the frost has hardened the snow and the track has been made.

And we were off for the Anitschkov bridge, at the other end of the Nevsky Prospect. This choice of a goal flashed into our mind only because the way was long, for we had really nothing at all to

say at this early hour to the four bronze horses which decorate the end; but then we were enchanted to see the Prospect powdered with frost in full winter toilette. It is almost beyond belief how much more beautiful it was. This immense silver strip, stretched out beyond one's view between a double line of palaces, hotels, churches—themselves adorned with white touches, produced a truly magical effect. The colors of the houses—pink, grey, yellow—that ordinarily may seem a little bizarre, become wonderfully harmonious in conjunction with the dazzling network of brilliant spangles. The Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan we saw with delight was completely metamorphosed. She had indued her Italian cupola with a hood of Russian snow, drawn its cornices and Corinthian capitals in pure white, and placed upon the terrace of its rounded colonnade a balustrade of massive silver, similar to that ornamenting its iconostase. The steps leading to its portal were covered with a carpet of ermine, fine, soft and splendid enough for the golden shoe of the Tzarina to press.

The statues of Barclay de Tolly and Kutusoff seemed from their pedestals to rejoice that the sculptor, Orlovski, knowing the climate, had not dressed them in Roman garb, but in good bronze mantles. Unfortunately the artist had forgotten their hats, and the snow powdered their heads with its cold powder till they looked like marshals.

Near Our Lady of Kazan, crossing the Prospect under the bridge, is the Catherine canal. It was entirely frozen over, and the snow was piled up in the corners of the quay and on the steps of the stairs. A single night had sufficed to congeal everything. The ice that had been drifting along the Neva for several days was stilled, surrounding with a transparent mould the outsides of the ships fixed in their winter quarters.

In front of the houses the *dvorniks*, armed with shovels, were clearing the sidewalks and piling the snow up in the street, like stones on a roadway. Sleighs were pouring in from all sides and, strange to say, the *droskies* so numerous the night before had totally disappeared. Not a single carriage was anywhere to be seen. It was as if during a night Russia, returned to her primitive civilization, had not yet invented wheels. The *rospousky*, the *télégas*—every sort of a wagon—was on runners. The *moujiks*, harnessed with a rope, were drawing their parcels on tiny sleighs. The little, wide hats had perforce given place to the bonnets of velvet.

When the road has been made, and the frost has solidified the snow, one may fancy the enormous economy of force the sleigh brings about. A horse moves without effort, and with double the quickness, three times as much as he could ordinarily do. In Russia the snow for six months of the year is like a universal railroad, extending in every direction and permitting people to go where

they wish. This silver railroad possesses too the advantage of costing nothing—a point which even the most skillful engineers have never been able to attain. It is perhaps on that account that the iron roads have traced as yet but two or three furrows through the immense territory of the Empire.

We returned home delighted with our ride. After having breakfasted and turned into ashes a cigar, a delicious sensation in St. Petersburg, where it is forbidden to smoke in the streets under pain of a rouble fine, we started off to walk to the banks of the Neva to enjoy the change of scene. The broad river, that a few days before, we had seen dancing in perpetual movement, brilliant with the play of innumerable lights, furrowed by the ceaseless movement of ships, barks, tugs, and barges, and itself broad as a gulf, rushing impetuously towards the Gulf of Finland, had totally changed its aspect. To the greatest animation had succeeded the immobility of death. The snow lay in a thick layer over the ice, and as far as the eye could reach, between the stone piers, stretched a white valley from out of which here and there emerged the black points of masts, whose ships were half buried underneath. Pine branches and poles indicated where holes had been pierced in the ice for water, and marked the course to be followed from one bank to the other, for already foot passengers were crossing, and boards were

being placed for the horses and sleighs, though as yet wooden obstructions barred the way, since the ice was not sufficiently thick for safety.

In order to get a better view we went over to the Nicholas Bridge, about which we said a few words the evening we arrived in St. Petersburg. This time we were able to examine in detail the charming chapel built in honor of St. Nicholas, the Thaumaturge, at the point where the two movable parts of the bridge unite. It is a delicious little affair, in the Byzantine-Muscovite style, which so perfectly suits the orthodox Greek worship, that we could wish it were universally adopted throughout Russia. It consists of a sort of pavilion in blue granite, flanked at each corner with a column whose capital is composite in style, encircled in the middle with a band and fluted from top to bottom. The double pedestal is carved in diamond point. Three projecting windows are cut in three sides of the monument, and the end wall is resplendent with mosaics of precious stones, representing the patron saint of the chapel, draped in his priestly robes, a golden halo behind his head, an open book in his hand, and surrounded by celestial figures in adoration. Balconies of richly-wrought iron-work close the two arcades on either side. That of the façade, where is a staircase, gives access to the chapel. The cornice, covered with historical inscriptions in Slav characters, adorned with stars, has a series of ornaments in

the form of reversed hearts, alternating with sharply pointed carvings. The roof, pyramidal in shape, is supported by an arch on each side, and is entirely covered with golden scales. On its apex is one of those round Muscovite towers which looks so exactly like the bulb of a tulip, all starred with gold, and terminated by a Greek cross, whose foot is fastened in a crescent which is itself held in place by a ball. These golden roofs fill us with delight, especially when the snow has powdered them with its silver filings, and given them the air of old silver-gilt, whose gilding has partly worn off, producing tones of incredible delicacy, and effects absolutely unknown elsewhere.

A lamp burns night and day before the icon. When they pass by the chapel the *isvochtchiks* take their reins in one hand, raise their hats and make the sign of the cross. The *moujiks* prostrate themselves on the snow. The soldiers and officers repeat a prayer with an air of ecstasy, standing motionless and bareheaded, which is indeed praiseworthy in ten degrees below zero. The women climb the staircase and after many genuflections, kiss the feet of the statue. And these are not merely, as one might imagine, the common people, but also the highest class. No one crosses the bridge without giving a sign of respect—a salutation at least—to the saint who protects him, and the *kopecks* rain into the two chests placed on

either side of the chapel. But let us return to the Neva.

On the right, looking towards the city, a little back of the English quay, appears the five-pointed towers of the Church of the Horse Guards, their gold lightly frosted with white. Further on is the cupola of St. Isaac's, like to the diamond-starred mitre of a king magi, the brilliant spire of the Admiralty and a corner of the Winter Palace. In the background further to the left flashes from an island in mid-river the graceful, bold spire of the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose golden angel sparkles against a sky of turquoise, flecked with rosy cloudlets arching above the walls of the fortress. On the left (we are talking always as if we had turned our back to the sea) the bank does not display so rich a mass of lofty gold domes. There are fewer churches on this side, and they are enclosed within the interior of Vassili-Ostrov—as this quarter of the city is called. But still the palaces and hotels along the quay present long, lofty lines, most happily accentuated by the snow. In front of the bridge at the Exchange stands the Academy, a great palace of classic architecture, enclosing a circular courtyard within its square enclosure. Here a colossal staircase, adorned with two great Egyptian sphinxes with female heads, chilled and astonished to feel on their backs of granite a fretwork of frost, descends to the river.

The obelisk of Roumianzov lifts its pointed top in the middle of the square.

If you cross the bridge and go up the river, passing the Winter Palace and the Hermitage, as far as the Marble Palace, then turn just before reaching the Troitski Bridge you will discover a new view which is well worth observing. The river separates into two arms that form the Great and the Little Neva, making an island, whose point opposed to the current of the water—when the water flows—is decorated with grandeur and beauty.

At each corner of the esplanade, where the island ends, rises a sort of lighthouse, or rather rostral column of pink granite, with prows of ships and anchors in bronze, surmounted by a brass beacon, which stands on a pedestal surrounded with seated statues. Between these two columns one catches a glimpse of the Exchange which is a copy of the Parthenon, a parallelogram surrounded with pillars.

Only here they are Doric, and the building itself is higher than the row of columns surrounding it, and terminates in a triangular gable, like a Greek frontal, in which is an arched window half hidden by a group of sculpture placed on the cornice of the portico. At the right and left are respectively the University and Custom House, built in a simple style. The two lighthouses, with their lofty, dignified outlines, form a charming relief to these slightly cold, classic buildings. In the arm of the

Little Neva are crowded together ships in winter quarters, whose unrigged masts cut the horizon with their slender lines. Now, to this slight sketch, on pearl-grey paper, add a few touches of pure white and you will have a pretty little picture to place in your album.

We will go no farther to-day. It is not absolutely hot on these quays and bridges where a wind straight from the pole is blowing. Everyone walks as fast as he can. The two lions placed at the entrance of the Imperial Palace look numb, as if they could scarcely hold the balls placed under their paws.

The next day there was a most brilliant display of sleighs and calèches on the English quay and the Prospect. It seems strange that in a country where twenty degrees below zero is by no means unusual that closed carriages should be used so little. It is only in the last extremity that Russians use a careta and yet they are a chilly people. But the pelisse is a protection against the cold, which they know so well how to use that they laugh at weather that would freeze the mercury. They put but one sleeve on at most and hold it tightly closed by inserting the hand in a little pocket placed in the front. It is an art to wear a pelisse, and one not to be learned in a moment. A Russian, by an imperceptible movement, can cross, double or throw it around his body, like the swaddling clothes of an infant or the wrappings

of a mummy. The fur keeps for several hours the temperature of the room in which it has been hanging, and isolates you completely from the outside air. In the pelisse you have the same degree of warmth as at home, and if, renouncing the vain elegance of the hat, you put on a wadded cap or a fur bonnet you are no longer prevented by the protruding brim from turning up your collar, with its fur touching the skin, and your neck, eyes and ears are protected. Your nose alone, between the two furred enclosures, is exposed to the inclemency of the weather. If it turns white people kindly tell you, and by rubbing it with a handful of snow its natural color is readily restored. These little accidents only happen during an exceptionally severe winter. Old dandies, rigid observers of the Paris and London fashions, unable to resign themselves to the cap, have had a hat made for themselves that has no brim in the back and only a visor in front, for no one can think of wearing his collar turned down. The wind would cut your bare neck with its icy touch, which is as disagreeable as the contact of steel to the neck of a patient.

The most delicate women do not fear to drive in open carriages and breathe the freezing air for an hour, for it is salubrious and life-giving, refreshing the lungs oppressed by the hothouse temperature of the houses. One sees nothing but their faces, rosy from the cold. The rest is nothing but

a pile of pelisses and muffs, amid which it is well-nigh impossible to distinguish a form. Over their knees is drawn a great white or black bear's skin, edged with scarlet. The carriage looks like a boat piled up with furs from which emerge smiling heads.

Confounding the Dutch sleighs with the Russians, we had fancied anything but the reality. In Holland there glide over the canals sleighs shaped like swans, dragons, or seashells, gilded and painted by Hondekoeter, or Vost, whose panels have been carefully preserved, to which are harnessed horses with pompons, feathers and bells, but more frequently pushed from the back by a man on skates. The Russian sleigh is not a plaything, an object of luxury and amusement for several weeks, but an article of daily use and the highest utility. Nothing has been changed in its necessary shape, and the sleigh of the master is similar in all structural points to that of the *isvochtchik*. Only the iron runner is handsomer and more gracefully curved, the body is of mahogany or wicker-work, the trimming of the seats is of pressed morocco, the dashboard of varnished leather. A carriage-boot replaces the hay, a costly fur the old, moth-eaten skin. The details are more luxurious, that is all, though the luxury consists in great measure in the livery of the coachman, the beauty of the horse and the rapidity of his gait. As with the

drosky, a second horse is frequently harnessed to the sleigh as a wheeler.

But the height of everything is the troïka, a vehicle eminently Russian and full of local color and picturesqueness. The troïka is a large sleigh that will hold four persons sitting opposite each other, beside the driver, and is harnessed with three horses. The middle one, who is in the shafts, has the collar and round douga over his neck. The two others are fastened to the sleigh by an outside trace, and a loose strap attaches them to the collar of the middle horse. Four reins guide the three, for the outside ones have but one. Nothing is more charming than to see a troïka dash by on the Prospect or the Admiralty Square during the fashionable hour. The middle horse trots straight ahead, the two others gallop and turn from one side to the other. One must look fierce, untamed and pretend to kick and shy; the other must toss his mane, rear, dance about, touch his knees to his lips, caper to right and left, with gaiety and caprice. He is the "coquet." These three noble chargers, with their metal chains, their gossamer-like harness, shining here and there with gold ornaments of delicate workmanship, recall the antique horses who drew through the triumphal arches red-bronze chariots to which they were held by nothing. They seem to play and gambol before the troïka according to the dictates of their own fancy. The middle horse alone has

a serious look, like a wise friend between two giddy companions. You may readily imagine, it is by no means an easy matter to maintain this apparent disorder when they are all going at full speed, and each animal has a different gait. Sometimes, too, the fiery one plays his rôle in earnest, and the "coquet" is rolled in the snow. It is necessary then, in order to drive a troïka to have a coachman of consummate skill. But what a charming sport! We are astonished that no "gentleman-rider" of Paris or London has imitated it. Of course, the snow does not last so long in England or France.

As the sleighing continues good, at the end of several days, coupés, berlins and calèches appear on runners. These carriages, whose wheels have been taken off, present a rather extraordinary appearance. They look like half finished equipages placed on trestles. The sleigh has infinitely more grace and style.

When we saw the pelisses, the sleighs, the troïkas, the carriages on runners, and the thermometer descending one or two degrees every morning, we thought winter had surely arrived. But the wise habitués shook their old heads and said skeptically: "No, it is not winter yet." And indeed this was not winter, the true winter, the Russian winter, the Arctic winter, as we discovered to our cost later.



The first of these is the fact that the Russian people are not only a people of great energy and courage, but also a people of great intelligence and culture. This is shown by the fact that the Russian people have not only a long and rich history, but also a long and rich literature. The Russian people have also a long and rich tradition of art and science. This is shown by the fact that the Russian people have not only a long and rich history, but also a long and rich literature. The Russian people have also a long and rich tradition of art and science.

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A Russian Troika





WINTER.



## VIII.

### WINTER.

THE winter this year has not been up to the good, old Russian traditions, but has shown itself as capricious as a Parisian season. Sometimes the wind from the pole has frozen one's nose and turned one's cheeks wax-color, and again the southwest wind has melted and turned into rain its mantle of ice. Dazzling snow was succeeded by grey snow. The track, crisping under the sleigh's runners like powdered marble, became a miry mixture, worse than the macadam of the boulevards. Or else in a night the thermometer would descend twelve or thirteen degrees, a new white covering would bedeck the roofs and the droskies would disappear.

Between ten and twelve degrees below zero the winter assumes character and grows poetic, becoming as rich in beauty as the most splendid summer, though both painters and poets have failed to do it justice.

Now, for several days, we have had a true, Russian cold, and we will tell of some of its aspects, for at this intensity the cold is visible, and can

be readily seen, without being felt, through the double sashes of a warm room.

The sky is clear and blue, though of an entirely different shade from the azure of the South. This is steel-blue, or ice-blue of a charming tint never yet produced by any brush, not even by Aivasovski's. The dazzling, cold light, the frozen sun brings a blush to the cheeks of some little pink cloudlets. The snow, sparkling like diamonds, as brilliant as Parian marble, has grown doubly white under the hardening touch of the frost. The trees, covered with icy crystals, seem turned into silver flowers, fit for the Garden of the Fairies.

Put on your cloak, turn up the collar, pull your furred bonnet over your eyebrows, and hail the first *isvochtchik* that passes. He will run up to you and place his sleigh close to the sidewalk. No matter how young he may be, his beard will be entirely white. His breath, condensed into icicles around his face, blue with cold, gives him the beard of a patriarch. His stiff hair whips his cheeks like frozen serpents, and the skin which he spreads over your knees is sown with a million little white pearls.

Now you are off. The cold, penetrating, icy, but healthful air, cuts your face. The horse, warmed by his rapid pace, breathes out jets of smoke, like a dragon of fable, and from his flanks, all wet with perspiration, rises a mist of vapor. As you keep on, you see the horses of other *isvocht-*

chiks eating before the mangers. The perspiration has frozen on them, till they are coated with a crust of ice, like a layer of glass. When they start off again, the coating breaks and falls in pieces only to be again formed when they are still. These changes, that would be the death of an English horse before the end of a week, do not affect the health of these little animals, who are quite indifferent to the inclemency of the weather. In spite of the severity of the season, only the most expensive horses are ever covered. Instead of the leather coverings, with embroidered crests in the corners, that are used in England or France for valuable horses, here they throw over the smoking flank of a blooded animal a piece of Persian or Smyrna carpet of the most brilliant colors.

Closed carriages pass, mounted on runners, their windows covered with a thick layer of ice, a curtain of quicksilver spread by winter, which prevents the inmates from being seen or from themselves seeing. If Cupid were not chilled in such a temperature, he would find as much mystery in the caretas of St. Petersburg as in the gondolas of Venice. We cross the Neva in a sleigh. The ice, which is two or three feet thick, in spite of several little thaws that melted the snow, will not budge till spring, at the great breaking up. It is strong enough to bear heavy chariots, even artillery. Pine branches designate the road to follow and places to avoid. At certain places the ice is

cut in order that the water that is running under this crystal floor may be drawn out. The water, warmer than the outer air, smokes through these apertures like a boiling teakettle; but everything in this world is relative, and it would be just as well not to trust too much in its warmth.

It is an amusing sight, when one is passing along the English quay or walking by the Neva, to watch the fish that are taken from the tanks to be eaten in the city. When the scoops bring them alive from the tanks and throw them on the deck of the boat, they wriggle about, but in a moment are stiff and still, imprisoned in a sheath. The water clinging to them has been frozen around them.

In this intense cold, objects are frozen with a rapidity that is amazing. Place a bottle of champagne between the two sashes, it will be chilled in a few moments, better than in any ice bucket. I will crave here permission to relate a little anecdote of personal experience. Impelled by our old Parisian habits, just as we were going out, we lighted an excellent Havana cigar. On the door-sill we suddenly remembered the prohibition against smoking in the streets of St. Petersburg under the penalty of a fine of a rouble.\* To throw away an exquisite cigar, from which two or three puffs have been taken, is a grave thing for a smoker. Since we were going but a few steps we

\* This prohibition has been removed.

hid the cigar in the hollow of our hand. To carry a cigar is not an infraction of the law. When we took it out in the protection of the house whither we were going, the end that had been in the mouth and was a little damp, was transformed into a piece of ice, but at the other end the generous flame was still burning.

But so far it had been only thirteen or fourteen degrees below zero, and that is not at all the real cold that generally arrives about the Feast of the Epiphany. The Russians were complaining of the mildness of the winter and saying that the climate was changing. They had not deigned yet to light the wood piles placed under the iron pavilions of the Imperial Theatre and of the Winter Palace, where the coachmen can warm themselves while awaiting their masters. It was too mild! But in spite of that a chilly Parisian could not help experiencing a certain arctic, polar feeling when, on coming out of the opera or the ballet, he saw, by a moonlight of dazzling cold on the broad, snow-covered Place, the lines of private carriages with their coachmen, powdered with particles of the shining ice, the horses fringed with silver, and a pale light struggling through the frozen lanterns, and was conscious of a terrible fear lest he should be himself frozen in his sleigh. But his pelisse is impregnated with heat and preserves around him a delicious atmosphere. If he should live at the Malaia Morskoia or upon the Nevsky

Prospect, in a direction that forces him to pass near St. Isaac's, he must not forget to throw a glance on the church.

Pure, white lines indicate the great divisions of architecture, while on the cupola, half blotted out by the darkness, there shines at the highest part a single brilliant point of light, just opposite the moon, which seems to be looking at herself in this golden mirror. This luminous spot is of so intense a brightness that it could be readily taken for a lighted lamp, and the effect is magical. But then nothing is so beautiful as this great temple of gold, bronze and granite, standing on a carpet of spotless ermine under the blue rays of a winter moon.

Are they going to build, as in the famous winter of 1740, an ice palace, that long files of sleighs are carrying enormous blocks of ice, cut like stone, as transparent as diamonds, fit to form the diaphanous walls of a temple to the mysterious Genius of the Pole? Not at all. They are the supplies for the icehouses. In order to provide for the summer, at the most favorable time, these immense, transparent blocks, with sapphire shades, have been cut from the Neva, and each is so large as to require a cart for itself alone. The drivers are seated on the ice or lean on it as if on cushions, and when the train of sleds, owing to some obstruction, stops, the horses, with an entirely Northern *gourmandise*, bite the ice in front of them.

In spite of all this frost, if you are asked to join a party to the island, go by all means without fear of losing your nose or ears. If you are weak enough to care about these appendages, is not your fur there ready to answer for everything?

The troika, or large sleigh, with five places and three horses, is there before the door. Hurry up and go down. Your feet in a foot-warmer of bear's skin, enveloped to the chin in your satin cloak, lined with sable, pressing to your breast a wadded muff, your veil drawn and already covered with a thousand brilliant spots, they have only been waiting for you to be off, and to buckle the fur carpet to the four tholes of the sleigh. You will not be cold—two lovely eyes warm the most glacial temperature.

In summer the islands are the Bois de Boulogne of St. Petersburg. In winter they scarcely deserve to be called islands. The cold solidifies the canals, and the snow covering them, they are joined to the mainland. During the cold months there is but one element—the ice.

You have crossed the Neva and passed the last streets of Vassili-Ostrov. The character of the buildings changes. The houses are less scattered among the gardens with wooden fences, placed transversely, as in Holland. Everywhere wood takes the place of stone or rather of brick. The streets become roads and you bowl along over a sheet of untouched, level snow. It is a canal. The

little signboards that are placed along the side of the road to prevent carriages from losing their way amid the widespread whiteness, look for all the world at a distance like gnomes, hooded in high white felt bonnets, and clothed in narrow brown robes. Some, whose beams are vaguely outlined under the drifted snow, alone indicate that we are traveling on a water course completely frozen and covered over. Soon a great forest of fir trees comes in sight, from out of which peep restaurants and tea houses, for delightful parties are made up to come here, frequently at night, when the temperature makes the mercury freeze at the bottom of the thermometer.

Nothing can be more beautiful than those immense white alleys, gleaming amid the dark curtain of pines where the track of the sleigh is scarcely perceptible. The wind had shaken the snowfall of several days from the branches, till there remained but a few brilliant patches here and there on the dark foliage, like touches left by a skillful painter. The trunks of the firs stood straight and slender as pillars, justifying the title of "Nature's Cathedral," given to the forests by the romanticists. Amid a snow a foot or two deep, a pedestrian is an impossible being, and in the long avenue there were but three or four moujiks wrapped in their touloupes, and plunging their leather or felt boots into the depths of white dust. An equal number of black dogs, or those that

looked so by contrast, ran around in circles like Faust's spaniel, or addressed each other with the signs of canine free-masonry, the same all the world over. This part of the islands is called Krestovsky, and it contains a charming cluster of chalets, or summer-houses, occupied during the summer by a colony of Germans. The Russians excel in wooden buildings, and carve the pine with quite as much skill as do the Tyrolese or Swiss. They make embroideries, lace, fret-work, flowers, every sort of ornament, of which the saw or hammer is capable. The little Krestovsky houses, constructed in this Swiss-Muscovite style, must be delicious homes in summer. A great balcony, or rather a lower terrace, like an open room, occupies the whole first story of the front. It is there, amid the flowers and shrubs, the family live during June and July. Pianos, tables and sofas are placed there that they may enjoy the luxury of living in the open air, after having been shut up for eight months in the atmosphere of a hothouse. The first fine days after the breaking up of the ice on the Neva, every one moves. Long lines of carts, loaded with furniture, start from St. Petersburg for the islands. As soon as the days grow short and the evenings become cold, they return to town, and the cottages are closed till the next year. But they are not less picturesque under the snow, which changes their wooden lace work into silver fligree.

If you keep on, you will soon come to a broad glade, where there is what is called in Russia "mountains of ice." These Russian mountains created a great furor in Paris at the time of the Restoration; but the difference of climate necessitated difference of construction. Wheeled cars glided down a sharply inclined groove, and ascended another, though lower one, pushed by the first impulsion. Accidents were by no means rare, for sometimes the cars were derailed, which caused this dangerous amusement to be given up. The ice mountains of St. Petersburg are surmounted by a light pavilion, terminating in a platform, which is reached by a wooden staircase. The course is made of boards, protected by planks at the sides, held in place by strong beams. The angle of descent is rapid at first, then more gentle, and over the boards water is poured which, freezing, makes a slide as smooth as glass. The corresponding pavilion has a separate track, so there is no danger of collisions. Two or three persons go down together in a sleigh, guided by a man on skates who holds it in the rear, or else one goes down alone on a little board, that is guided by the foot, the hand or a stick. Some fearless people throw themselves on it head foremost, or in some other apparently hazardous position, though there is no real danger. The Russians are very adroit in this eminently national game, which they practice from infancy. They find in it the pleasure of extreme

speed in a biting cold. An entirely Northern sentiment which, at first, a stranger from warmer lands finds it difficult to understand, though soon he grows to enjoy it too.

Often on coming out of the theatre or from an evening reception, when the snow gleams like a pile of marble, and the moon shines clear and cold, or in the absence of the moon, the stars scintillate with that brightness produced by the cold, instead of thinking of returning to their warm, comfortable, bright homes, a group of young men and women, well wrapped in their furs, form a party to go to the islands for supper. They get into a troika and the swift equipage, the three horses abreast, dashes off amid the ringing of bells and flying of silver dust. The sleeping inmates of the inn are awakened, lights flash, the samovar steams, champagne of Veuve Cliquot is chilled, plates of caviar, and ham, strings of herring, and cold fowl, and little cakes are spread on the table. Then follows laughter and chatting and eating and drinking and smoking, and for dessert every one rushes down the ice mountains, amid the gleaming torches held by moujiks. Then at two or three in the morning they drive back to town, enjoying in the midst of a whirlwind of speed in the sharp, healthful, living air, the voluptuousness of the cold.

Let Méry, who cannot endure anyone to say "a beautiful freeze," declaring that cold is always

horrid, shiver and put on another cloak, as he reads this article bristling with frost. Yes, the cold is a delight, a fresh intoxication, a vertigo of whiteness, that we, heretofore so chilly, are beginning to enjoy like a man of the North!

If this icy description of a Russian winter has not already fallen from the numb fingers of the reader, and if he has still the courage to breast, in our company, the rigors of the thermometer, let him come with us after a good, hot cup of tea for a turn on the Neva and a visit to the camp of the Samoiedes who have settled themselves exactly in the middle of the river, as the only spot in St. Petersburg cold enough for them. These polar beings are like white bears. A temperature of twenty degrees seems to them quite spring-like, making them pant with the heat. Their migrations are not regular, and follow unknown reasons or caprices. They have not made their appearance here for several years, and it is a piece of good luck that they should have arrived during our sojourn in the city of the Tzars. We will descend to the Neva by the stairs of the Admiralty into the slippery, trodden snow, not without, however, glancing at Peter the Great, upon whose head the frost has placed a white wig, and whose bronze horse must be sharp-shod to hold its equilibrium on the block of Finnish granite, which is its pedestal.

A curious crowd formed a black ring around

the huts of the Samoiedes. We slipped between a moujik in his touloupe, and a grey-coated soldier, and over a woman's shoulder we peeped into the tent of skins held by sticks buried in the ice, which looked like a paper cornucopia, with its point turned upwards. A low opening, that could only be entered on all fours, allowed a glimpse among the bundles of furs, which might be either men or women. Outside some skins were suspended on ropes, and skates lay on the ice, and a Samoiede, standing near a sleigh, appeared quite indifferent to the ethnographical investigations of the crowd. He is dressed in a bag of skin, the hair inside, to which is added a hood, with a little opening for the face. Great mittens that covered the wrist, so that no air could penetrate; thick boots of white felt, fastened with straps, complete this costume, of little elegance to be sure, but hermetically closed to the cold, and, moreover, by no means devoid of individuality. The color is that of leather tanned by primitive methods. The face framed by the hood, is tanned, reddened by the air, with prominent cheek bones, a flat nose, a large mouth, steel-grey eyes, with light eyebrows; but it is not ugly, and its expression is sad, intelligent and gentle.

The industry of the Samoiedes consists in asking a few kopecks for a drive on the Neva in their sleighs harnessed with reindeer. These sleighs, of an excessive lightness, consist merely of a

bracket-seat, covered with a strip of fur, where the passenger sits. The Samoiede, standing at the side, on one of the wooden runners, controls the reindeer by means of a long pole. The animals are harnessed three abreast or four in pairs. It is curious and interesting to see reindeer, so small and delicate in appearance, with their slender legs and branching antlers, run and drag burdens with docility. These deer go very swiftly, or rather seem to go very swiftly, for all their movements are extremely quick. But they are very small, and there is little doubt but that a trotter of the Orlov breed would readily distance them, especially if the course were a long one. But nothing could be imagined more graceful than these light equipages, describing great circles, revolving around and returning to the point of departure, having scarcely brushed the surface of the river. Connoisseurs declare that the reindeer are not seen here to their full advantage, because it is too hot for them—ten degrees above zero.

In fact, one of these poor beasts had been unharnessed and seemed to be suffocating, and in order to restore him they were piling snow on him. These reindeer and these sleighs carried away our imagination towards their icy native land with a queer longing. We, whose life had been passed in seeking sunshine, were seized with a strange love of the cold. The madness of the North was exercising its magic influences over us,

and had not a matter of importance detained us in St. Petersburg, we would have gone away with the Samoiedes. What a delight it would have been to fly with all speed towards the pole crowned with aurora borealis, past the forests of snow-laden firs, past the half buried woods of birch, past the spotless, white plain, over the dazzling snow which, with its tint of silver, would make us almost believe in a voyage to the moon, through an atmosphere pure, invigorating, cutting as steel, uncorrupted by aught, not even by death. How we would have loved to have lived a few days under a tent shining with the frost, half buried in the snow, that the reindeer toss with their hoofs, in the hope of finding a short, rare moss. Happily, one fine morning, the Samoiedes went away, and when we went to the Neva to see them once more, we found nothing but a grey ring marking the spot where their huts had been. And with them disappeared our aberration. Since we are on the subject of the Neva, let us say a word of the great blocks of ice cut from its frozen bosom and piled up here and there like blocks of stone, waiting till they shall be carried away. It looks like a quarry of crystal or diamond works. These transparent cubes, illumined by the light, are clothed in all the prismatic tints of the solar spectrum. In certain places, where they are piled up, one could fancy them a palace of the fairies in ruins, especially when the sun is setting under

a sky of golden green, striped with bands of crimson. These are effects that astonish the eye, and which are never reproduced in painting, lest the artist should be accused of lack of reality and truth. Fancy a long valley of snow formed by the river, with pink lights, blue shadows, strewn with enormous diamonds, flashing with fire, and terminating in a deep red horizon line. And for a foreground, a boat imprisoned in the ice, a pedestrian, or a sleigh crossing from one side to the other.

When night has fallen, if you will return to the side of the fortress, you will see two parallel lines of stars flashing across the river. They are gas lights on posts placed in the ice at the height of the Troitski bridge of boats, that is taken away in the winter; for the Neva, directly it is frozen over, becomes for St. Petersburg a second Nevsky Prospect, the principal artery of the city. We people of temperate regions, with whom, in the most rigorous winters, the rivers scarcely freeze, find it difficult not to experience a feeling of apprehension, as we cross in a carriage or sleigh an immense river, whose deep waters are rolling silently under a crystal floor which could break and close over you like a trap. But gradually the perfectly composed air of the Russian reassures you. Then, too, it would require enormous weights to break that layer of ice, two or three feet thick, and the snow covering it gives it the appearance

of a road. Nothing distinguishes the river from the land, unless it may be now and then the presence of some boat caught by the cold and forced into winter quarters.

The Neva is a power at St. Petersburg. They do it homage and bless its waters in fine style. This ceremony, that is called "the Baptism of the Neva," takes place on the 6th of January, according to the Russian calendar. We viewed it from a window of the Winter Palace, to which a Gracious Protection gave us access. Although the weather was very mild for the season, which is generally intensely cold, it would have been very painful for us, unacclimated as yet, to remain several hours bareheaded on that icy quay, which is always swept by a fierce wind. The broad halls of the palace were filled with people of the highest rank: high dignitaries, ministers, the diplomatic corps. Generals, covered with gold, starred with decorations, went up and down between the hedges of soldiers in full uniform, awaiting the opening of the ceremony. First divine service was celebrated in the chapel of the palace. Hidden in the back of the gallery, we followed with respectful interest the rites of this worship, new to us, and impressed with the mysterious majesty of the East. From time to time at prescribed moments, the priest, a venerable old man with long hair and beard, mitred like a magi, in a robe stiff with gold and silver, and supported

by two acolytes, came out of the sanctuary, whose doors flew open, and recited the sacred formulas in a feeble, but well-modulated voice. While he was chanting the psalm, we caught a glimpse, within the sanctuary amid the shining of gold and candles, of the emperor and the imperial family. Then the doors closed, and the service continued behind the dazzling veil of the iconostase.

The chapel singers, in great velvet robes, trimmed with gold, accompanied and sustained, with the marvelous precision peculiar to Russian choirs, the hymns, in which is probably to be found more than one theme of the lost music of the Greeks.

After the mass, the cortege walked across the palace halls, to the baptism, or rather the benediction, of the Neva. The emperor, the grand dukes, in uniform, the clergy in their robes, embroidered with gold and silver, the exquisite costumes of Byzantine fashion, the varied uniforms of generals and high officials, amid the compact mass of soldiers drawn up on either side of the great halls, made a spectacle both magnificent and imposing.

On the Neva, opposite the Winter Palace, close to the quay to which stairs covered with carpet united it, a pavilion, or rather a chapel, had been erected, with light columns supporting a cupola, painted green, from which was suspended a Holy Ghost, surrounded by rays.

In the middle of the platform under the dome, surrounded by a balustrade, was a well, communi-



The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold, crisp air. It felt like a fresh blanket after a long, hot summer. The sun was just starting to rise, painting the sky in soft, golden hues. I took a deep breath, savoring the scent of the morning. The world around me seemed to be waking up, and I felt a sense of peace and tranquility. It was a beautiful start to a new day.

I walked towards the park, my feet crunching on the fallen leaves. The trees were bare, their branches reaching out like skeletal fingers against the sky. A gentle breeze rustled the leaves, and I could hear the distant chirping of birds. The park was quiet, almost deserted. It was a perfect spot for a walk, away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

As I walked, I thought about the things that were happening in the world. There were so many changes, so many challenges. But I felt a sense of hope, a belief that things would work out. I had faith in the future, in the people who were working hard to make a better world. I knew that I could do my part, that I could make a difference. It was a responsibility, but it was also a privilege. I would do my best, and I would never give up.

The walk was peaceful, and I felt a sense of calm. The world was so beautiful, so full of life. I was grateful for the simple things, for the beauty of nature. I would cherish this moment, this walk in the park. It was a reminder of the good in the world, of the love and compassion that we all have. I would carry this feeling with me, and I would use it to guide me through the challenges of life.

### A Troika Race

The race was a thrilling event, with three teams competing for the top spot. The crowd was cheering, and the atmosphere was electric. The race was a test of skill and endurance, and it was a true spectacle. The winner was crowned the champion, and the crowd erupted in applause. It was a moment of triumph, a moment of glory.





eating with the waters of the Neva, from which the ice had been cleared away. A row of soldiers placed at long intervals kept a space clear for a large circle around the chapel. They stood bare-headed, their helmets placed near them, their feet in the snow, so absolutely motionless they might have been taken for sign posts.

Under the windows of the Palace, held in by their riders, pranced the horses of the Circassians, Lesghines, Tcherkesses and Cossacks, who compose the escort of the emperor. It gives one a strange feeling to see, except in the circus or opera in this day of advanced civilization, warriors like those of the Middle Ages, with helmet and coat of mail, armed with bows and arrows, clothed in Oriental fashion, having Persian carpets for saddles, for a sabre a curved Damascus blade, inscribed with verses from the Koran, looking quite ready to take their places in the cavalcade of an emir or a caliph.

What haughty, warlike faces and savage purity of type! What slender, nervous, supple bodies and elegance of bearing, joined with those costumes so characteristic in shape, so happy in color, so well calculated to heighten every point of manly beauty! It is singular that those people who are called "barbarians" alone know how to dress. Civilized nations have utterly lost all sense of costume.

The cortege issued from the Palace, and from

our double-sashed window we saw the emperor, the grand dukes, the priests, enter the pavilion which was soon so full that the movements of those officiating at the edge of the well could with difficulty be distinguished. At the supreme moment the cannon placed on the other side of the river, thundered one after the other. A cloud of blue smoke, a flash of light, floated between the snowy carpet of the river and the grey-white sky. Then the detonation shook the windows till they rattled.

There is something about a cannon that is terrible, solemn, and at the same time joyous, as there always is with strength. Its voice that roars in a battle, mingles equally well in a fête. It adds that element of joy unknown to the ancients, who had neither bells nor artillery—noise!—which alone can speak amid great multitudes and make itself heard, amid the immensities of space.

The ceremony was over. The troops marched away, and the spectators retired quietly, without hurry, or tumult, as is the habit of the Russian crowd, the most tranquil of all crowds.

RACES ON THE NEVA.



## IX.

### RACES ON THE NEVA.

What! will we not return home soon? Indeed it is outrageous to keep us out of doors so long, in such weather! Are you determined to freeze our noses and ears? You have promised us "a winter in Russia," and you have indeed kept your word! But the thermometer marks scarcely more than fifteen degrees above zero to-day, quite a springlike temperature, and the Samoiedes, who were camping on the frozen river, have been obliged to go away, because it was too hot. So do not feel anxious, but follow us bravely. The horses to the troïka are prancing and rearing with impatience. There are races on the Neva to-day: we must on no account neglect this opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Northern sport, which in its own way is as elegant, as high-bred, as odd, as capable of arousing intense passion as is the English or French amusement.

The Nevsky Prospect and the streets leading into the broad Place, where rises the column of Alexander, that gigantic monolith of pink granite, which towers over the enormous Egyptian monuments, present a spectacle of unusual animation, very

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much like the avenue of the Champs Elysées when a steeple-chase has drawn hither all the fashionables.

The troïkas, drawn by three horses abreast, each with a different gait, dash past, their bells ringing gayly; sleighs glide by on steel runners, harnessed to superb high-steppers, that are controlled with difficulty by the coachmen in their velvet, four-skirted bonnets and blue and green blouses. Other sleighs with four places and two horses, berlins, calèches, taken off their wheels and placed on iron runners, are all turned in the same direction, forming a crowd of vehicles of ever increasing density. Sometimes a sleigh of the old Russian fashion, with its snow-protector stretched like a boom-sail, and its tiny horse with dishevelled mane galloping alongside of the trotter, slips into the inextricable labyrinth, frisky and swift, covering its neighbors with white particles. A similar concourse in Paris would produce a great noise, a prodigious uproar; but in St. Petersburg the picture is only noisy to the eye, if one may be allowed such an expression. The snow, interposing its padded carpet between the cobble-stones and the vehicles, extinguishes all sound. The steel runner makes scarcely more noise on these roads, cushioned by winter, than a diamond on a pane of glass. The little whips of the moujiks do not crack; the masters, enveloped in their furs, do not talk, for were they to do so, their words would be

frozen, like those that Panurge met near the pole. And all moves on in silent swiftness, amid a mute whirlwind. Although nothing could be more unlike, it produces a little the effect of Venice.

Pedestrians are rare, for no one walks in Russia, except the moujiks, whose felt boots allow them to walk on the pavements, that are cleared of snow, but are often covered with an icy coating that is dangerous, especially when one has on the indispensable galoches.

Between the Admiralty and the Winter Palace is the wooden floor, that descends from the quay to the Neva: here the sleighs and carriages, several rows deep, are forced to reduce their speed, and even to stop and await their turn to descend.

Let us take advantage of this pause to examine our neighbors of both sexes, among whom chance has thrown us. The men wear cloaks with a military cap, or a fur bonnet, with a castor back; a hat is rarely seen. Besides not being warm itself, its brim prevents the turning up of the pelisse collar, so that the back of the head remains exposed to the bitter winds. But the women are more lightly clad; apparently they do not suffer as much with the cold as do the men. A black satin cloak, lined with sable or Siberian blue fox, a muff of the same, is all they add to their toilette, which is similar to that of the most elegant Parisiennes. Their white necks, which somehow the cold does not redden, are quite un-

covered by their fur tippetts, and their heads are only protected by a coquettish French hat, which of course leaves much of them uncovered. We thought with terror of the rheumatism, the neuralgias, the influenza, to which these reckless beauties were exposing themselves, for the pleasure of being in the fashion, in a country and in a temperature where to lift one's hat in returning a salutation is often a dangerous action. Animated by the fire of coquetry, they did not apparently suffer from the cold.

Russia, throughout its immense stretch of territory, contains many different races, and the type of feminine beauty varies greatly. But certain traits may be considered as characteristic, such as a very fair complexion, grey-blue eyes, blonde or chestnut hair, and a certain *embonpoint*, caused by the lack of exercise, and the seclusion brought about by the winter of seven or eight months' duration. One might say these Russian beauties were odalisques, that the genii of the North kept shut up in a hothouse. They have a skin of cold cream and snow, with camellia-like tints, like those women of the *serail* who are always veiled and whose skin has never been touched by the sun. Amid the whiteness of their faces, their delicate features are slightly marked like those of the man-in-the-moon, but the uncertain outline imparts to them an extraordinary sweetness and polar grace. As if to refute our description, here in a sleigh, stopped close

by our troïka, is a beauty of an altogether Southern type, with velvet-black brows, aquiline nose, oval face, dark skin, and lips red as a pomegranate; a Circassian of pure race, perhaps but yesterday a Mahomedan. Here and there, eyes, whose outside corner runs toward the temple, remind us that on one side Russia touches China. Tiny Finnish women, with blue eyes, hair of pale gold, and pink and white skins, add a Northern variety of type, in strong contrast to certain beautiful Greeks from Odessa, recognizable by their straight noses and black eyes, like the Byzantine Madonnas. The ensemble is altogether charming, and these lovely heads issue like winter flowers from a pile of furs, that is itself covered with white or black bearskins over the sleighs or carriages. The descent to the Neva is made through a broad inclined plane, between the bronze lions on the quay, whose pedestals mark the wharf, when the river, free of ice, is covered with a crowd of boats.

The sky, on this day, had not the deep azure it has when the cold reaches ten or twelve degrees below zero. A soft grey sky, a forerunner of more snow hung low over the city, seeming to rest on bell-tower and steeple as on pillars of gold. This quiet, neutral tint, showed to great advantage the edifices glowing with bright colors and adorned with gold. Opposite, on the other side of the river, like avalanches scattered over a valley, rise the granite columns of the classic monument of the

Bourse. At the point where the Neva separates, the spire of the fortress lifts its golden shaft, made more intense from contrast with the grey sky. The race-course, with its wooden stands and track, marked by cords stretched on posts planted in the snow, and a hedge of pine branches, runs transversely to the river. The crowd of people and carriages was enormous. The privileged ones occupied seats in the grand-stand, if it is a privilege to sit in an open gallery in the cold. Sleighs, troïkas, calèches and even simple carts and other more or less primitive vehicles (for no restriction interfered with the popular pleasure) crowded two or three rows deep around the race-course. The river bed belongs to everybody. Men and women, in order to see better, took the coachman's place on the box. Nearer the barriers were the moujiks in sheepskin touloupes and felt boots, soldiers in grey caps, and others who could not do better. This vast crowd swayed back and forth on the ice-floor of the Neva, apparently quite indifferent to the fact that a deep river was running under this frozen crust of two or three feet. There were packed close together thousands of people and a considerable number of horses, to say nothing of all sorts of vehicles. But the Russian winter is faithful and is incapable of playing such a trick as of opening under them traps for their destruction.

Outside the track, grooms were exercising ra-



The first thing I saw when I stepped out of the train was a vast, open plain stretching to the horizon under a pale, overcast sky. The air was thick with a heavy, damp mist that clung to the ground and the buildings. In the distance, a few small, dark structures were visible, but they were mostly obscured by the fog. The ground was uneven and covered with patches of dry grass and mud. The overall atmosphere was one of desolation and quiet despair. I felt a sense of being lost in a strange, unfamiliar world. The only sound I heard was the distant rumble of a train and the occasional creak of a wooden structure. I walked slowly, my boots sinking into the soft earth. The fog seemed to be alive, breathing and shifting around me. I could see the faint outlines of buildings and trees, but they were so close together that they almost blended into one another. The light was dim and flat, casting long, dark shadows that seemed to reach out and touch me. I felt a chill run down my spine, not from the cold, but from the sense of being watched. It was as if the very air was filled with eyes, staring at me from every direction. I tried to shake the feeling off, but it only grew stronger. The fog was not just a weather condition; it was a presence, a living, breathing entity that had taken hold of the place. I knew then that I was in a very real and very dangerous situation. The Bourse, St. Petersburg, was not just a place; it was a prison, a trap, and a tomb.

**The Bourse, St. Petersburg**





cers who had not yet run, or walking about, under their Persian carpets, those who had already finished. The track formed an elongated ellipse; the sleighs do not start from the front, but are placed at equal intervals, which are diminished or increased according to the swiftness of the trotters. Two sleighs opposite the tribune, two others at the lower extremity of the circle, await the signal to be off. Sometimes a man on horseback gallops alongside of the trotter to stir him to his best, by every means in his power. The horse in the sleigh must only trot, but sometimes he goes so fast that the galloping horse can scarcely keep up with him, and once started the race-horse is abandoned to his own will. Many coachmen, sure of their animals, disdain to make use of this trick and run alone. Any trotter that breaks into a gallop more than six times is put out of the running. It is a wonderful sight to see these magnificent beasts, for whom insane prices have been paid, tearing over the ice, swept clean of snow till it looks like burnished glass. Smoke issues in streams from their scarlet nostrils, a mist covers their flanks and their tails are strewn with diamond powder. The nails of their shoes cut the smooth surface, and they devour space with as proud a security as if they were on the best built road in the world. The coachmen hold their reins with all their might, for the horses with but a trifling weight to draw, and unable to gallop, need to be held in, rather

than urged. The tight reins, too, are a support to them, as they dash along, till their knees touch their mouths.

As near as we could tell, no particular age or weight are requisite to those participating; only a certain speed in a given time being demanded. Often troïkas contend with one or two-horse sleighs. Each one chooses the vehicle or harness, most to his liking. It may even be that a spectator just arrived in his sleigh is seized with the desire to take his chance and forthwith he enters the lists.

At the races of which we are telling, quite a picturesque incident happened. A moujik, from Vladimir, it was said, taking to town a load of wood or frozen meat, was watching the race from his rustic troïka. He was dressed in a touloupe spotted with grease, with a bonnet of old, worn fur, and boots of shapeless, white felt; a stiff, neglected beard bristled around his chin. His turnout was composed of three little thin, ungroomed horses, as hairy as bears, too dirty to talk of, covered with icicles, their heads hanging down, while they ate snow piled up on the river. A douga, gay with vivid colors in lines and zigzags, probably the work of the peasant himself, formed the finest part of his equipage. This wild, primitive vehicle presented the strangest contrast to the luxurious sleighs, the conquering troïkas, and the elegant equipages careering around the race-

course, and more than one sarcastic remark was made at the expense of the humble vehicle. And truth to tell, it produced amid all this luxury the effect of a spot of black on an ermine cloak.

But the little horses, their hair matted with frozen sweat, gazed slyly through the stiff meshes of their manes at their blooded brethren, who drew away from them disdainfully, for animals, too, despise poverty. But fire flashed from their eyes, and they struck the ice with their tiny feet.

The moujik, standing on the seat, contemplated the race-course, without appearing surprised at the prowess of the trotters. Sometimes a smile penetrated the crystals of his mustache, his grey eyes shone with malice, and he seemed to say: "We can do quite as well as that." Then all at once he resolved to enter the lists and tempt the goddess fortune. The three little beggars shook their heads proudly, as if they comprehended it was a question of supporting the honor of the poor horse from the steppes, and without being urged, started off at a speed that soon filled the other contestants with alarm. Their slender, little legs went like the wind, and they won by one minute several seconds from the pure blooded English horses, the Orlovs and all the rest. The moujik had not over-estimated his rustic team.

The prize was decreed to him—a magnificent piece of silver, wrought by Vaillant, the fashionable silversmith of St. Petersburg. This triumph

excited the people, generally so quiet and silent, to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

As he came out of the course, he was overwhelmed with proposals to buy his horses. He was offered three thousand roubles apiece for them, an enormous sum for the man and the horses. To his credit be it said, he refused positively. Wrapping his piece of silver in an old cloth, he climbed into his troïka, and returned to Vladimir, as he had come, unwilling to be separated at any price from the beasts which had made him for a moment the lion of St. Petersburg.

The race was over, and the carriages left the river bed for the various quarters of the town. The climbing the wooden incline, connecting the Neva with the quays, would furnish the subject for an interesting and characteristic painting.

To ascend the steep slope, the noble beasts bent their necks, dug their hoofs into the slippery floor, and pulled with all their force. It was a confused scene full of picturesque effects, that would have been full of danger, too, but for the skill of the Russian coachmen. The sleighs went up three or four abreast in irregular line, and more than once we felt, on the back of our neck, the warm breath of an impatient steed, who would willingly have passed over our head had he not been held vigorously in check. And often a flake of foam, fallen from a silver bit, would alight on the head of a terrified woman. The sleighs made one think

of an army of chariots, making an assault on the granite quays of the Neva, themselves not unlike the parapets of a fortress. In spite of the tumult, there were no accidents,—the absence of wheels makes an encounter more difficult—and the equipages dispersed with a swiftness that would have thrown a prudent Parisienne into spasms.

It is a great pleasure, when one has been in the open air for hours, exposed to a wind straight from the icy recesses of the pole, to return home, to free oneself from one's pelisse, to take off one's galoches, to wipe from one's mustache the melting snow, and to light a cigar, which we could not do outside. The warm atmosphere envelops the body, like a caress, making the limbs supple. A glass of hot tea,—in Russia, tea is not drunk in cups—makes one deliciously comfortable, as the English say. The circulation, suspended by immobility, is re-established, and you taste that delight of the house, unknown to the South. But already it is growing dark, for night comes quickly at St. Petersburg, and at three o'clock the lamps must be lighted. From the chimneys come curls of smoke, fragrant with culinary odors; everywhere the stoves flame up, for people dine earlier in St. Petersburg than in Paris. Six o'clock is the extreme limit, and then only among people who have traveled and assumed English or French ways. As it happens, we are to dine out, so we must dress and over our evening toilette put the

pelisse and once more thrust our fine boots into furred galoches.

With night it has grown colder; an arctic wind whirls the snow over the sidewalks like smoke. The ice creaks under the runners of the sleigh. Great, pale stars shine from out the depths of the clear, violet sky and over the darkness shines, from the summit of the golden dome of St. Isaac's a point of light, like the lamp of a sanctuary, that is never extinguished.

We turn the collar of our pelisse to our eyes, tuck the bear-skin around our knees, and without inconvenience from the thirty degrees of difference between our chamber and the street, we soon find ourselves, thanks to the sacred "na prava, na leva" (to the right! to the left!) before the *portecochère* of the house where we are expected. At the foot of the stairs the atmosphere of a hothouse envelops us, melting the ice from our beard, and in the ante-chamber, the servant, an old soldier, who has kept his military cloak, takes off our furs and hangs them among those of the other guests, who have already arrived—for exactitude is a Russian quality. In Russia Louis XIV. could not have said: "I almost had to wait."

RUSSIAN HOMES.



## X.

### RUSSIAN HOMES.

AN ante-chamber in Russia is not like such a room in any other quarter of the world. The pelisses hung on the rack, with their sleeves and broad pleats, look something like human figures suspended there. The galoches underneath simulate feet, so that the effect of all these furs in the dim light is indeed strange. Achim von Arnim would, in fancy, see the cast-off clothes of M. Peau d'Ours, paying a visit. Hoffmann would place his archivists or councilors under their mysterious folds. And the French, reduced to the tales of Perrault, would hide the seven wives of Blue Beard within yonder black cabinet. The furs, hung near the stove, are impregnated with a warmth they keep for several hours. The servants have a wonderful instinct in recognizing them; even when the number of guests gives to the ante-chamber the appearance of Michel's or Zimmerman's stores, they are never wrong, but place on the shoulders of each one the garment that is his own. A Russian apartment unites with comfort all the luxury of English and French civilization. At first sight one could fancy himself in London

or Paris, but soon the local character betrays itself in a thousand minute details. First of all, the Byzantine Madonna, with her child, surrounded with carvings of silver or enamel, illumined by the flame of a lamp that is never extinguished, makes you realize that you are neither in London nor Paris, but in orthodox, Holy Russia. Sometimes the image of the Saviour replaces that of the Virgin.

There are saints, too, ordinarily the patron saints of the master and mistress of the house, clothed in carapaces of gold and shining halos. Then the climate demands certain requirements that cannot be ignored. Everywhere the windows are double and the space between them is filled with sand, which is often covered with moss. On account of the double sashes, the windows in Russia have neither shutters nor blinds, they can neither be opened nor shut, for the sashes are fixed for the entire winter, and are carefully fastened. A narrow casement serves to renew the air, a disagreeable and even dangerous operation, on account of the great difference between the interior and exterior temperature. Thick curtains of rich stuffs deaden the feeling of any cold that might come through the glass, which is more open than is generally believed. The rooms are larger and higher than in Paris. Our architects, so ingenious in modeling modern bee-hives for the human bee, could make an entire flat and often two

stories out of a St. Petersburg drawing-room. Since all the rooms are hermetically sealed and the halls heated, the temperature is sixty-six to sixty-eight degrees, which allows the women to wear muslins and have their arms and necks bare. The furnaces emit heat at night as well as during the day. Hot steam pipes or great stoves of monumental proportions, of fine white or painted porcelain, and reaching to the ceiling, scatter heat where the furnaces cannot reach. Open fires are rare, and are only used in spring or autumn. In winter they would draw away the heat and chill the room; so the chimneys are closed and filled with flowers. Flowers are indeed a truly Russian luxury! The houses overflow with them! Flowers receive you at the door and mount the stairs with you. Irish ivy festoons the balustrade, jardinières are on every landing. In the embrasure of the windows are tall banana trees; talipots, magnolias, camellias in flower, reach to the gilded ceilings, orchids hang suspended from glass, china or terra-cotta pockets. Pieces of Japanese or Bohemian glassware in the centre of the tables or the corners of the sideboards overflow with exotics. They live there as well as in a hothouse, and in point of fact, every Russian house is that. In the street you are at the arctic pole, but in the house you could fancy yourself in the tropics.

It is as though by this profusion of bloom the eye were seeking to console itself for the intermin-

able whiteness of winter. The longing to see something that is not white must become a sort of agony in a land where the earth is covered with snow for more than six months of the year. They have not even the satisfaction of looking at the green painted roofs, for they do not change their white shirts till springtime. If their apartments were not transformed into gardens, they would think that green had disappeared forever from the world.

As for the furniture, it is like ours, only larger, more ample, as it must be, in view of the dimensions of the rooms. But it is the cabinet that is entirely Russian. It is made from a delicate, precious wood, carved in openwork like the sticks of a fan, and occupies a corner of the drawing-room and is festooned with rare running plants. It is a sort of confessional for intimate conversation, furnished inside with divans, where the mistress of the house can isolate herself from the mass of her guests, and at the same time remaining with them can receive three or four guests of distinction. Sometimes this cabinet is in colored glass, flowered with pictures, and mounted in panels of gilded leather. Nor is it at all unusual to see, amid the ottomans, *dos-à-dos*, easy chairs, a gigantic white bear, stuffed and padded like a sofa, and offering to visitors an altogether arctic seat. Little black bears often serve as stools. It all recalls amid the elegancies of modern life the icebergs of

the North Sea, the immense snow-covered steppes, and the pathless forests of pine, the true Russia, which one is tempted to forget in St. Petersburg.

The bed-chamber is not generally furnished with the luxury and elegance given to it in France. Behind a screen or carved partition, a little, low bed is tucked away, like a camp-bed or a divan. The Russians are of Eastern origin, and even in the upper classes they do not care for the sweetness of a comfortable couch. They sleep anywhere they may happen to be, like the Turks, often in their pelisses, on the broad, green leather sofas, that are in every corner. The idea of making of the bedroom a sort of sanctuary never occurs to them. The ancient habits of the tent seem to have followed them into the very heart of that civilization, with whose every elegance and every vice they are acquainted.

Rich hangings adorn the walls, and should the master of the house pride himself on his artistic tastes, there will certainly be crimson damask from India, or dark embroidered stuffs, or surrounded by rich frames, a Horace Vernet, a Gudin, a Calame, a Koekkoek, perhaps a Leys, a Madou, a Tenkate, or if he desire to prove his patriotism, a Bruloff and a Aïvasovsky—who are the most fashionable painters. Our modern school has not reached them, although we did see two or three Meissoniers and as many Troyons. The manner of our painters does not seem finished enough for

the Russians. The interior we have just described is not that of a palace, but of a house, not of the middle class,—this word means nothing in Russia—but of a house that is *comme il faut*. St. Petersburg is gorged with hotels and immense palaces, some of which we will make known to our readers. Now that we have described the decoration, it is time to pass to the dinner. Before seating themselves at table, the guests approach a little round table, where are laid out caviar (sturgeon eggs), salt herrings, anchovies, cheese, olives, slices of sausage, Hamburg smoked beef, and other *hors d'œuvres*, that are eaten with rolls, to pique the appetite. The luncheon is taken standing and is washed down with vermouth, Madeira, Dantzic whiskey, Cognac, and cumin, a sort of anisette, that recalls the *raki* of Constantinople and the Greek Islands. Imprudent or timid travelers, unable to resist their polite insistence, allow themselves to taste everything, unaware that this is but the prologue to the piece, and sit down to the veritable dinner quite unable to eat more.

In all good houses they eat in French fashion, but the national taste shows itself in certain characteristic details. As, for example, with the white bread is placed a piece of black rye bread, that the Russian guests consume with visible enjoyment. They also delight in salted cucumbers, called *agourcis*, which to us did not seem the least delicious. In the middle of the dinner, after having

drunk the fine brands of Bordeaux and champagne, that are only found in Russia, they drink porter, ale and above all, *kwas*, a local beer made from the fermented crusts of black bread, which can only be enjoyed by a cultivated taste, and that does not seem to a stranger, at least, worthy of the magnificent Bohemian or wrought silver glasses in which it is served.

The *chtchi* is a kind of stew, composed of the breast of mutton, fennel, onions, carrots, cabbage, barley and prunes. These heterogeneous ingredients have an original taste, to which one soon grows accustomed, especially when the habit of traveling has made you cosmopolitan in matters culinary, and taught your palate to accustom itself to all sorts of surprises. Another very popular soup is *quenefes* soup. It is a consommé in which, when it is boiling, is dropped a little at a time a paste diluted with eggs and spices, that the heat makes into little balls, something like the poached eggs in the Parisian consommé. Dumplings are served with the *chtchi*.

Everyone who has read "Monte Cristo" will remember the meal at which the old prisoner of the Chateau d'If, summoning by a ring of gold the fairies to his service, ordered sterlet from the Volga, a gastronomic marvel, unknown to the most recherché tables outside of Russia. In fact, the sterlet merits his reputation; it is a delicious fish, with fine, white flesh, perhaps a trifle too fat, and is something

between the smelt and the lamprey. It sometimes attains a great size, but those of medium weight are the best. While not indifferent to the pleasures of the palate, we are neither a Grinod de la Raynière, nor a Cussy, nor a Brillat-Savarin, to talk about the sterlet in romantic style, and we regret it, for the sterlet is a dish worthy of the most fastidious gourmets, who would think the sterlet of the Volga worth the journey to Russia.

Carefully fattened fowls, whose flesh is permeated with the juniper-berries upon which they are fed, till they diffuse an odor of turpentine, appear often upon Russian tables. The celebrated bear-hams frequently take the place of the classic York hams, and fillet-of-elk, the common roast beef. All these are dishes never seen on Western tables.

Every people, even when governed by a similar civilization, preserve certain tastes and dishes that strangers find it difficult to enjoy. So cold soup, in which are together pieces of ice and fish, in a bouillon seasoned with vinegar and sugar, astonish foreign palates as much as the *gaspacho* of the Andalusians. This soup is only served in summer, and is said to be very refreshing and the Russians are wild about it.

Since most of the vegetables are raised in hot-houses, the season has nothing to do with them. Fresh peas are eaten every month in the year in St. Petersburg. Asparagus never feels the winter. It is tender, large, juicy, and entirely white; that

little green point, such as we have, is never seen, and it can be eaten from either end. In England they eat salmon cutlets, in Russia they eat chicken cutlets. This dish has become fashionable, since the Emperor Nicholas tasted it in a little inn near Torjek, and took a fancy to it. The receipt had been given to the landlady by an unfortunate Frenchman, who was unable to pay his bill, and made her fortune. We agree with the emperor,—these cutlets are truly delicious. Let us especially mention the cutlets of the Preobrajenski, which deserve a place on the bill of fare of the best restaurants.

We have only mentioned the peculiarities and differences, for in the great houses the cooking is French, done by Frenchmen. Indeed, France furnishes cooks to the world.

The greatest luxury in St. Petersburg is to have fresh oysters. As they come from a distance, in summer the heat spoils them; in winter the cold freezes them. They often cost a rouble apiece, and in spite of their high price they are seldom good. The story is told of a moujik who had become very rich and who received his freedom, for which he had in vain offered enormous sums, through sending to his master a barrel of fresh oysters at a time when they were not to be bought. We do not guarantee the truth of the little story, but it proves at least, even if it be invented, the rarity of oysters in St. Petersburg at certain times.

For the same reason there is always a basket of fruit for dessert. Oranges, bananas, grapes, pears, and apples are arranged in charming shapes. The grapes generally come from Portugal. Often they are ripened by artificial heat in the cellar of a house, half-buried in the snow. In January we have eaten strawberries in St. Petersburg which were doing their best to turn red in the middle of a green leaf, on a miniature earthen pot. Fruit is one of the passions of Northern people; they bring it at great expense from abroad, or force rebellious nature to give them at least its form, for both taste and fragrance are lacking. The stove, no matter how hot it may be, but imperfectly takes the place of the sun.

We crave pardon for these gastronomic details,—it may be interesting to know what a people eats. “Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.” The proverb thus modified is none the less true. Though the Russians imitate the French cuisine, they still keep certain national dishes, which they really like most. It is the same with their character. Although they conform to the highest refinements of Western civilization, they none the less preserve certain primitive instincts, and it would take very little for even the most elegant ones to return to the life of the steppes. When you are at table, a servant, in black, with white cravat and gloves, as irreproachable in his dress as an English diplomat, stands

behind you, solemnly, ready to administer to your slightest want. You could fancy yourself in Paris. But if by chance you should look carefully at the man you would perceive that his skin was yellow, his eyes turned up towards his temples, his cheek-bones were high, his nose flat, his lips thick, and his master, who has followed your glance, says carelessly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world: "He is a Mongol Tartar, from the confines of China."

This Mohammedan, or perhaps heathen Tartar, fulfills his duties with automatic regularity, and the strictest major-domo could find no fault with him. He produces the effect of a perfect servant, but he would be more to our taste were he to wear the costume of his tribe, the tunic buckled at the waist, with a metal belt, and his sheep-skin bonnet. It would be more picturesque, but less European, and the Russians are unwilling to look like Asiatics.

The table-service, china, glass, silver, while leaving nothing to be desired, has no especial points of difference, unless it may be the charming little platinum spoons wrought with gold, which they use for dessert, coffee and tea.

Bowls of fruit alternate with baskets of flowers, and often the sweetmeats are encircled with violets, which the hostess gracefully presents to her guests.

The conversation is always in French, especially in the presence of a stranger. All Russians of

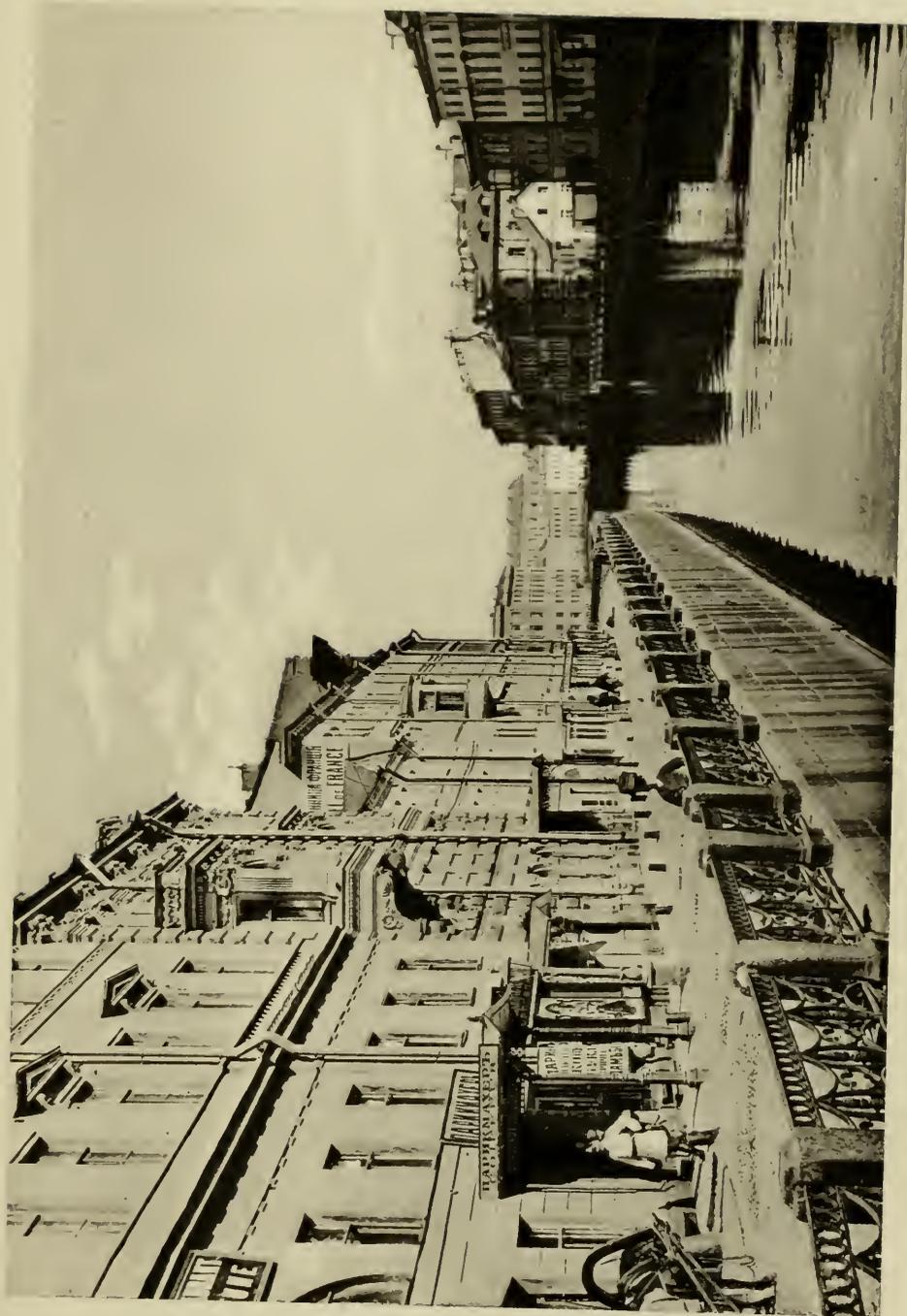
rank speak French well, using the popular idioms and the fashionable phrases quite as if they were natives of Paris. They even understand the French of Duvert and Lausanne, which is so thoroughly and entirely Parisian, that many provincials understand it with difficulty. They speak without accent, though with a little singing tone, that is very pretty and contagious. They make use, too, of certain formulas, that are doubtless national, and familiar to people who speak even very well a language that is not their own. For example, they use the word *absolument* in a curious way. You ask "Is such a one dead?" They reply *absolument* in the sense of yes. Then the words *donc* and *déjà* recur constantly in their conversation, with an interrogative signification—"Have you then, already seen St. Petersburg?"

The manners of the Russians are polite, caressing, and highly polished. They are conversant with all the details of French literature. They are great readers, and many an author little known in France is widely read in St. Petersburg. The vagaries of the green-room, the "chronique scandaleuse du demi-monde" reach the banks of the Neva, and we heard many a piquant detail about things in Paris of which we had known nothing before. The women, too, are very cultivated, with the facility characteristic of the Slav race, and read and speak several languages. Many have enjoyed Byron, Goethe, Heinrich Heine, in their



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Moika Quay, St. Petersburg





original tongue, and should a writer be mentioned, they show by a well-chosen quotation that they are conversant with his writings. As for their toilettes, they are of the highest elegance,—more fashionable than the fashion. Diamonds flash on lovely very bare shoulders, while gold, chain bracelets, from Circassia or the Caucasus, alone show by their Oriental workmanship that it is Russia.

After dinner, people scatter over the drawing-rooms. On tables albums, beauty-books, keepsakes, landscapes, are lying, for the comfort of the timid or embarrassed. Stereopticon views provide amusement, and sometimes a woman, yielding to persuasion, seats herself at the piano, and sings to her own accompaniment a national air or a gypsy song in which the melancholy of the North is intermingled with the ardor of the South, with a strange accent. It is like a *cachucha* danced on the snow by moonlight.



A BALL AT THE WINTER PALACE.



## XI.

### A BALL AT THE WINTER PALACE.

WE are going to tell you about a fête where we were present without being there, where our body was absent though our eyes were invited,—a court ball. Ourselves invisible, we saw everything, and yet we were not wearing the ring of Gyges, nor yet the kobold's green felt hat, nor indeed any other talisman.

In the Square of Alexander were stationed numerous carriages, in weather that would have frozen Parisian coachmen and horses stiff, but which did not seem severe enough to the Russians to light the brasiers ready in the iron kiosks near the Winter Palace. The trees of the Admiralty, jewelled with frost, looked like great white plumes planted in the ground, and the triumphal column had sheathed its pink granite in an icy layer till it resembled a sugar-loaf. The moon, riding in a cloudless sky, was flooding all this whiteness with its cold light, deepening the shadows, and giving all sorts of queer shapes to the motionless carriages, whose frozen lanterns flashed points of flame into the darkness. In the background, the enormous Winter Palace shone at every window, like a moun-

tain pierced with holes, and brilliant with interior fire.

Perfect silence reigned in the square ; the severity of the weather kept away the curious, who with us never fail to be attracted by the spectacle of such a fête, even when seen from afar and from outside. And even had there been a crowd, the length of the palace is so tremendous that it would have been scattered and swallowed up in this vast space, that only an army could fill.

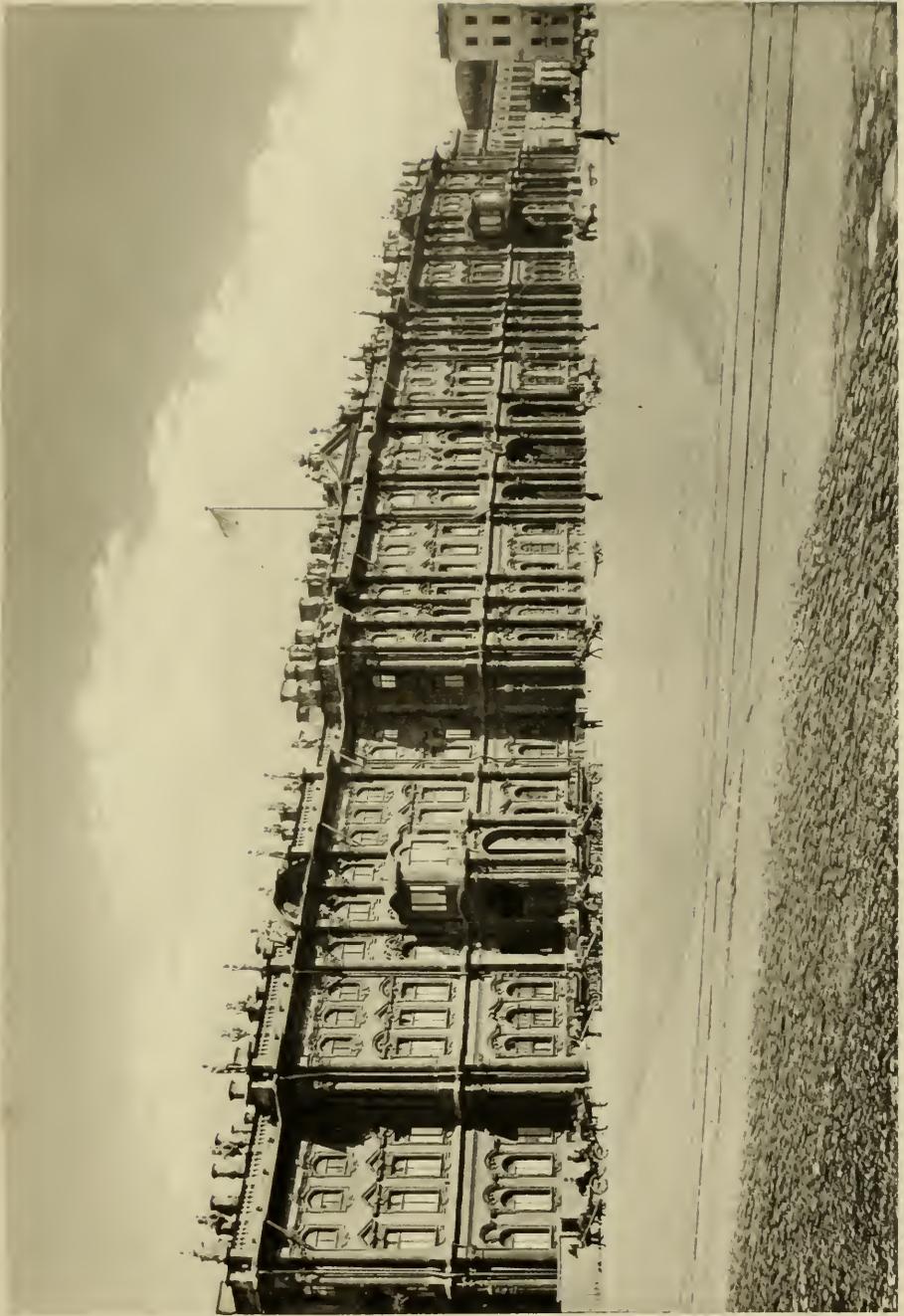
A sleigh crossed diagonally the great white sheet, across which fell the shadow of the column of Alexander, and disappeared down the dark street separating the Palace from the Hermitage, to which its aërial bridge gives a certain resemblance to the Canale di Paglia of Venice.

A few minutes later, an Eye, which need not have been joined to a body, fluttered along the cornice supported by the portico of the Palace gallery, while the line of torches fastened in the entablature sheltered it behind a hedge of light. Indeed the light concealed it better than the darkness could have done, making it invisible among so much splendor.

The gallery seen from there was long and wide, with polished pillars and smooth floors, that reflected the candles and goldwork. Pictures filled the spaces between the columns, though the distance was too great to see their subjects. Already men in brilliant uniforms and women in flowing









court robes were sauntering about. The crowd gradually increased and filled with a brilliant varicolored throng the gallery that was all too small in spite of its generous dimensions.

Every eye was fixed upon the doors through which the emperor must enter. Finally the doors were thrown open; the emperor, the empress, and the grand dukes traversed the gallery between two quickly formed hedges of guests, addressing occasionally a word to a personage of distinction, standing near by, with a gracious and noble familiarity. Then the imperial group disappeared through the opposite door, followed at a respectful distance by the great dignitaries of state, the diplomatic corps, the generals and the courtiers. Scarcely had the cortége entered the ballroom, when they were followed by the Eye, reinforced this time by a strong lorgnette. It was a very furnace of light and heat, that shone as if it were on fire. Rows of lights ran along the cornices; in the embrasures of the windows great candelabra with a thousand arms burned like burning bushes; hundreds of chandeliers hung from the ceiling in constellations of fire. And all these lights uniting their rays, formed the most dazzling illumination that could be imagined to adorn a fête.

The first impression, especially from that height, and leaning over the chasm of light, is like a vertigo. Amid the blaze of light, the brilliant costumes, the flashing of diamonds, the mirrors with

their endless reflections, it is difficult to distinguish anything. A glowing scintillation prevents you from seizing any object; but gradually the eye habituates itself to so much splendor, and the black spots floating before it, as when you have been looking at the sun, disappear; and it surveys from end to end this hall of gigantic proportions, all marble and white stucco, whose polished walls reflect objects, like the jasper and porphyry of the Babylonian buildings in Martyn's engravings.

The kaleidoscope, with the passing of its brilliantly colored particles, which ceaselessly form themselves into new shapes; the chromatrope, with its dilations and contractions, where a cloth becomes a flower, then transforms its petals into the points of a crown, ending in a whirling sunburst, passing from rubies to emeralds, from topaz to amethyst, enclosing a diamond centre, a million times larger, can alone give an idea of this moving parterre, of gold, of precious stones, of flowers, renewing its glowing forms by a perpetual movement.

On the entrance of the royal family, this moving splendor stood still, and faces and persons could be distinguished among the motionless, brilliant throng. In Russia, court-balls are opened by a polonaise; it is not a dance, but a sort of procession, a march with torches, that is full of individuality. The participants stand in two rows, leaving a space clear in the middle of the ball-

room. When everyone is in his place, the orchestra plays a slow, majestic air, and the promenade begins; it is led by the emperor, who has asked a princess or lady, whom he desires to honor, to dance.

The Emperor Alexander II. wore that evening a magnificent uniform, which showed to great advantage his tall, slender, graceful figure. A white jacket reaching half-way to the knees was braided with gold and bordered with blue Siberian fox at the neck, wrists, and at the bottom; his breast was covered by the jewels of the great orders. Tight blue trousers showed every movement of his limbs, and terminated in thin half-boots. The emperor's hair was cut short, leaving exposed his smooth, well-formed forehead. His features, of an absolute purity, seem modelled for a gold or bronze medal. His deep blue eyes were especially remarkable in his dark face, which, owing to his journeys and exercise in the open air, is less white than his forehead. His mouth might offer a fit subject to a Greek sculptor, and the expression of his face was majestic, firm, and sweet, lighted up from time to time by a smile full of grace.

The high officers of the army and palace, the grand dignitaries, each with a lady, followed the imperial family.

On every side sparkled uniforms covered with gold epaulets studded with diamonds; decorations, stars of emeralds and precious stones, blazed on

their breasts. A few, the highest in favor with grade, wore around their necks an order that is a mark of especial esteem—the portrait of the emperor, surrounded with brilliants; but they were rare and easily counted. The cortége is advancing all the while, gaining recruits at every step; a gentleman steps out from the row and extends his hand to a lady opposite him, and the couple join the others in the line, suiting their steps according to the gait of the head. It cannot be a very easy matter to walk thus, holding each daintily by the hand, under the fire of a thousand indifferent or sarcastic looks; the slightest awkwardness of gesture, the least misstep, the tiniest movement out-of-time, is sharply noticed. Military habits do much to help the men, but it must be difficult for the women! Most of them acquit themselves admirably, and of more than one it may be said “*Et vera incessu patuit dea!*” They pass along lightly, under their feathers, their flowers, their diamonds, with modestly lowered eyes or else looking about them, with an air of perfect innocence, managing with an inflection of the body, or little movement of their heels, their sweeping trains of silk and lace, fanning themselves leisurely, as much at ease as if they were walking alone in an avenue or a park. To walk in a noble, graceful, simple manner, when people are staring at you, is what more than one great actress has never been able to accomplish.

What gives originality to the court of Russia is that from time to time a young Circassian prince with wasp-like waist and broad shoulders joins the cortége, or a chief of the Lesghine guard, or a Mongol officer, whose soldiers are even now armed with the bow, the quiver and the buckler. Under the white glove of civilization, as it takes the hand of a princess or countess, is hidden a little Asiatic hand accustomed to hold the narrow handle of the kindjal between its brown, nervous fingers. But no one, apparently, thinks it remarkable; and indeed what is more natural than that a Mongolian or Mohammedan prince should walk through the polonaise with a *grande dame* of Greek orthodox St. Petersburg! Are they not both subjects of the emperor of all the Russias?

The uniforms and gala habits of the men are so brilliant, so rich, so varied, so covered with embroidery, with gold and with decorations, that the women, with their modern elegance and the light grace of the fashions of the day, find it difficult to hold their own against this massive eclat; but since they cannot be richer, they are more beautiful; their bare shoulders are worth all the orders in the world. To vie with this splendor, like the Byzantine madonnas they must have robes of gold and silver brocade, necklaces and ornaments of precious stones and radiant crowns of diamonds; but fancy dancing with a shrine of jewelry on one's body.

But do not believe too absolutely in their primitive simplicity! These simple robes are of English point, and their superimposed tunics are worth more than a dalmatic of gold or silver brocade; those bouquets on yonder tulle dress are caught with knots of diamonds; that velvet ribbon is fastened by a stone that might well have come from the diadem of a Tzar. What could be more simple than a white dress of taffeta, or silk or moire, with bunches of pearls, and several rows twined around the head! But the pearls are worth a hundred thousand roubles, and never will a fisher bring any of finer shape or purer water from any ocean! Then, too, in dressing with simplicity, they gain the favor of the empress, who prefers elegance to display, but you may be quite sure that Mammon has lost nothing by it. Only at first glance, as they pass rapidly by, one fancies that the Russian women display less luxury than the men; but it is an error. Like all women, they know how to make gauze more costly than gold.

When the polonaise has traversed the salon and gallery, the ball begins. The dances are not remarkable—quadrilles, waltzes, redowas, as in Paris, or London, or Madrid, or Vienna, or anywhere else in the *grand monde*—except of course the mazourka, which is danced at St. Petersburg with a perfection and elegance unknown elsewhere. Local peculiarities have a tendency to disappear everywhere, and they desert first of all the lofty

regions of society. In order to find them, one must leave the centers of civilization and descend to the depths of humble life.

For the rest, the *coup de'œil* is charming; the dances form exquisite figures in the midst of the splendid crowd, which has drawn aside to give ample space to the dancers; the whirling waltz puffs out the dresses, like the skirts of the spinning dervishes, and amid the rapid evolution, knots of diamonds, blades of gold and silver flash like lightning, and little gloved hands placed on the shoulders of the waltzers look like white camellias in massive gold vases.

Among the groups, the Hungarian magnate is especially remarkable for his magnificent costume, as well as the first secretary of the Austrian Legation, and the Greek ambassador, wearing native bonnet, the braided jacket, the *fustanelle* and *knemides* of the Greek noble.

After an hour or two of contemplation from its lofty eminence, the Eye is carried under the arches, through a labyrinth of mysterious corridors, into another hall, where the sound of the distant orchestra and ball expires in delicate murmurs. Comparative darkness reigns in this enormous room; it is there that the supper will be served. Many cathedrals are less vast. In the background amid the shadows, one catches a glimpse of the white-draped tables; in the corners shine in the uncertain light great masses of gold

plate; they are the sideboards. On a velvet-covered stage reached by steps stood a horseshoe table. Lackeys in grand livery moved about silently and quickly; major-domos, officers of the household, gave the last touches to the preparations.

Innumerable candles fill the candelabra and walls and arches. They stood in snowy whiteness in their sockets, like pistils in the calix of flowers, but not one shining star trembled on their points. They might have been frozen stalactites, and already, like the noise of rushing waters, was heard the dull roar of the approaching crowd. The emperor appeared on the threshold; it was like a *fiat lux*. A subtile flame ran like lightning from one candle to another; in a flash all were ignited, and a torrent of light filled the immense hall, illuminating it as if by magic. This sudden passing from twilight into glowing brilliance produced a most fairy-like effect. In our practical century, every marvel must be explained. Threads of prepared cotton united the wicks of the candles, which had been dipped in an inflammable essence, and the fire, applied at seven or eight places, was instantly communicated along the line. This means is employed to light the great chandeliers of St. Isaac's, and threads of guncotton hang, like spiders' webs, over the heads of the faithful. A row of gas jets raised and lowered could produce a similar effect, but gas, as we know, is never used in the Winter Palace. Only candles of the purest

wax are used there. It is only in Russia that the bees contribute their share towards the light.

The empress takes her place, with a few personages of high distinction, at the horseshoe table on the stage. Behind her gold armchair blazes, like a gigantic firework, an immense bouquet of white and pink camellias fastened against the marble wall. Twelve negroes of great size, chosen from the finest specimens of the African race, dressed *à la* Mameluke, in rolled white turbans, green jackets, with gold coins, full red trousers caught at the waist by cashmere belts, all braided and embroidered, went up and down the steps of the stage, handing the plates to the servants, or taking them from them, with the graceful, dignified movements peculiar, even in a servile occupation, to the Oriental. These Orientals performed their duties majestically, and gave to the European fête an Eastern *cachet* of the best possible taste.

The guests seated themselves according to their fancy at the tables placed for them. Rich gold or silver pieces, representing groups of figures or flowers, mythological or ornamental, adorned the middle of the tables; candelabra alternated with pyramids of fruit. Seen from above, the dazzling beauty of the glass, porcelain, plate and blossoms showed to greater advantage than lower down. A double row of women's bare shoulders, scintillating with jewels, adorned with lace, ran around the tables, betraying their loveliness to the invisible

Eye, whose glance could also linger on the brown or blonde heads, among the flowers, the foliage, the feathers and the jewels.

The emperor made the tour of the tables, addressing a few words to those whom he desired to honor, sometimes sitting down and moistening his lips in a glass of champagne, then rising to continue the same thing further on. These stops of a few minutes are considered as marks of especial favor. After supper dancing was resumed; but it was growing late. It was time to leave; the fête could only repeat itself, and for a strictly ocular witness it offered no further interest. The sleigh, which had crossed the Place and stopped at a little door in the narrow street separating the Winter Palace from the Hermitage, reappeared, then directed its course past St. Isaac's, carrying with it a pelisse and fur bonnet that concealed the face inside. As if the sky desired to enter into rivalry with the splendors of the earth, an aurora borealis tossed into the darkness its brilliant fireworks with tongues of silver, of gold, of purple and pearl, dimming the glory of the stars in its phosphorescent irradiations.

THE THEATRES.



## XII.

### THE THEATRES.

THE theatres of St. Petersburg are massive in proportions and classic in form. Standing in the midst of vast grounds, they can readily be seen from every side. We confess, for our part, we would have preferred some more original style, which might have been created from the forms peculiar to the country and thus entirely new effects have been produced. But Russia is by no means the only country to which this reproach may be addressed. An ill-comprehended admiration for antiquity fills all our capitals with Parthenons and *maisons carrées*, copied with more or less exactitude, by the aid of bricks or plaster. Only these poor Greek things present nowhere so homesick and unhappy an appearance as in St. Petersburg; accustomed to blue skies and sunshine, they shiver under the snows that cover their flat roofs for so many weary months. It is true, they are carefully swept after each snowfall, which fact is the best criticism on the style chosen. Stalactites of ice in the leaves of the Corinthian capitals! What do you think of that? A romantic reaction, which we trust will succeed, is being started in

favor of the Muscovite-Byzantine architecture. When they are not violated under the name of good taste, every country produces its own monuments, as it produces its men, its animals, its plants, according to the needs of its climate, its religion, its race; and what Russia should have is the Greek of Byzantium and not the Greek of Athens. After this objection, there remains nothing but praise. The great theatre, or Italian Opera House, is magnificent, and so large that it rivals in size La Scala or San Carlo; the carriages, waiting in an immense square, reach it without trouble or disorder. Two or three vestibules with glass doors prevent the entrance of the bitter outside air, affording a transition from ten or twelve degrees below zero to sixty or sixty-five above.

Old soldiers in the uniforms of veterans wait at the entrance, to take your pelisse, furs and galoches. They return them without a mistake, which seems a Russian specialty. As in Her Majesty's Theatre in London, so here people never go to the Italian Opera except in evening dress, unless one goes in uniform, which is the most usual; the women are in full toilette, with elaborate coiffures and bare neck and arms. This etiquette, of which we heartily approve, contributes much to the brilliancy of the scene. The parterre is divided in the middle by a broad aisle. A semicircular corridor surrounds it, bordered on one side by a row of boxes, that allows one to chat with one's friends who occupy









the *loges* on the *rez-de-chaussée*, during the *entr'actes*, and to leave one's place or to resume it without deranging anyone. The imperial box is the first object that strikes one on entering: it is placed exactly in the middle, opposite the stage, and is as high as two rows of the other *loges*; two enormous carved gilded posts support velvet curtains, which are looped back by heavy cords and tassels and support a gigantic shield, with the arms of Russia, the haughtiest and most fantastic of heraldic design. This two-headed eagle, surmounted by crowns, forms a charming *motif* for ornamentation, with its wings outspread, its fan-like tail, whose pennons are a cross between a feather and a flower; holding in its claws the globe and sceptre, in the background the shield of St. George, and, like a necklace of orders on its swelling breast, the arms of kingdoms, duchies and provinces. No Greco-Pompeian decoration produces half so satisfying an effect.

The stage-curtain presents a view of Peterhof, with its arcades, porticoes, statues and green roofs. The front of the boxes, rising in rows one above the other, are ornamented with white medallions in gold frames upon which are painted dainty, graceful figures or attributes standing out from rose-pink backgrounds. There are neither galleries nor balconies. The front of the stage, instead of being flanked with columns, is supported by these same great, carved, gilded posts, which

look as if they were poles destined to hold the pavilion of some Oriental tent; but the arrangement is graceful and novel.

It is by no means easy to define the style of the auditorium, unless one might borrow from the Spanish their word *plateresco*, which means a style of gold work, meant to describe the sort of architecture in which excessive ornamentation plays a thousand exuberant pranks amid a very disorder of richness. It is a mass of shell-work, interlaced designs, flowers, fruits, reflecting amid their golden glories the light from the magnificent chandeliers; but the general effect is gay, splendid, happy, and the luxury of the place frames to perfection the luxury of the spectators.

This ornamental folly pleases us more than a theatre whose architecture is crushingly correct. In such matters a little extravagance is better than pedantry. Velvet, gold, light in abundance, what more is needed? The *loges* in the first row are called the *bel-étage*, and, without a formal prohibition on the subject, this *bel-étage* is reserved for the high aristocracy and the court dignitaries. No untitled woman, no matter what her wealth or respectability, would dare to show herself there; her presence in this privileged row would astonish everybody, and no one more than herself. Here millions are not sufficient to efface every line of demarcation.

The first rows of the orchestra are reserved for

persons of distinction. On the one next to the musicians are seen only ministers, great officers, ambassadors, first secretaries of embassy, and other considerable and considered people. A celebrated stranger may also sit there. The two next rows are also very aristocratic. The fourth row admits bankers, strangers, government officials of a certain rank and artists; but a merchant would not dare to venture beyond the fifth or sixth row. There is a sort of tacit understanding that no one questions and all obey.

This familiar custom of sitting in the orchestra, for persons of the loftiest position, surprised us at first, for we have seen there the first personages in the empire. A man has his stall and at the same time a *loge* for his family, but this is the preferred place, which doubtless has given rise to the reserve that pushes the ordinary public to the more distant seats. This classification does not shock people in Russia, where the Tchín divides society into fourteen distinct categories, whose first class often contains but two or three persons.

In the Italian opera of St. Petersburg, the opera and the ballet are not given the same evening. The two are quite separate and have each their own evenings. The price of tickets for the ballet is less than that for the opera.

Since the dance forms the entire performance, the ballets are more extended than in Paris: they

run through four or five acts, with many tableaux and changes of scene, or else two are played the same evening. The great celebrities of song and dance have all appeared on the stage of the Grand Theatre. Each star has in turn shone under this polar sky, and lost none of its glory in so doing. By dint of roubles and a hearty welcome the needless fear of throat trouble or rheumatism has been overcome. No throat, no knee has been injured in this land of snows, where the cold is seen but not felt. Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache, Mario, La Grisi, Taglioni, Elssler, Carlotta, have all come, been admired and understood. Rubini was decorated here; august approbation arouses the verve of the artists, showing them that they are thoroughly appreciated, even though they decided after much hesitation to undertake the journey.

To win applause for dancing in St. Petersburg is not an easy matter. The Russians are excellent judges of a ballet, and the fire of their glasses is something to be feared. She who has faced the ordeal successfully may indeed feel sure of herself. Their Conservatory of dancing furnishes wonderful proficientes, and has a *corps de ballet* that is without equal for ensemble, precision and rapidity of evolutions. It is a delight to see those even lines, those trained groups, that scatter at the given moment, but to re-form under another guise: all those little feet falling in time, all those choregraphic battalions which are never discon-

certed or confused in their maneuvers! There are no little chats, no laughter or glances to the front or to the orchestra. It is the world of pantomime, from which speech is absent; but action does not exceed its proper function. This *corps de ballet* is chosen with infinite care from among the pupils of the Conservatory: many are pretty, all are young and well-formed and understand perfectly their condition—or their art, if you like that better.

The stage scenery is very rich, numerous and carefully designed, and is executed by German artists. The composition is ingenious, poetic and skillful, but often surcharged with petty details that distract the eye and diminish the effect. The coloring is generally pale and cold: every one knows the Germans are not colorists, and this defect is especially noticeable if one has lately been in Paris, where the magic of decoration is pushed so far. As for the theatre itself, it is admirably managed; the wings, the transformations, the shiftings, the play of electric light, and all the management necessary to a complicated *mise en scène*, are executed with the most perfect promptitude.

As we have said before, the aspect of the auditorium is wonderfully brilliant; the toilettes of the women stand out ravishingly from the background of the purple velvet *loges*, and to a stranger the *entr'acte* is not less interesting than the play: he can easily, by turning his back to the stage, hold for a few minutes on the end of his glass those

varied and to him novel types of female beauty. An amiable neighbor, with the aristocracy at the end of his fingers, pointed out by name the princesses, countesses and baronesses who, whether blonde or brunette, united to the dreaminess of the North the repose of the East as they mingled flowers with diamonds.

In the half-light of the *baignoires* shone certain theatrical celebrities, a few Bohemians of Moscow, in extraordinary toilettes, and a certain number of Baronesses d'Ange, exported from the demi-monde of Paris, whose well-known faces do not need to be discussed here.

The French Theatre, called also the Michael Theatre, is situated on the square of the same name. The interior is conveniently arranged, but poorly decorated; and, like the Grand Theatre, the first rows of its orchestra are occupied by Russians and strangers of distinction. It is well organized and the composition of its troupe is excellent. The actors introduce novelties for their benefit performances, which take place generally Saturday or Sunday, which, too, decide the play for the week. Such a piece has its first representation in St. Petersburg almost as soon as in Paris.

No Frenchman can help feeling a certain pride in seeing, hundreds of miles from Paris, under the sixtieth degree of latitude, his language so well known as to support an exclusively French theatre, for the French colony would not half fill it. The

Michael Theatre has just been rebuilt with many handsome additions, and the opening was inaugurated by a fine poetical discourse of Varlet's which Berton delivered with art, feeling and enthusiasm.

During our stay in the city of the Tzars, Ira Aldrigge, the famous American negro actor, was there; he played in the theatre of the Circus, not far from the Grand Theatre. He was the lion of St. Petersburg, and seats had to be taken days before. At first he played Othello. Ira Aldrigge's race enabled him to dispense with dye of any sort; nor did he need to cover his arms with chocolate-colored tights. His own skin was that required by the rôle. His entrance on the stage was magnificent. It was Othello himself as Shakespeare has created him, with eyes half-closed as if dazzled from the African suns, his nonchalant, Oriental attitude and that negro free-and-easy air that no European can imitate. As there was no English troupe in St. Petersburg, but only a German one, Ira Aldrigge recited his text in English, and Iago, Cassio, Desdemona replied in Schlegel's translation. The two languages, both of Saxon origin, did not go badly together, especially for us, who, knowing neither English nor German, fixed our attention upon the play of the countenances, the pantomime, and the plastic sides of the rôles. But the mixture must have been passing strange to those who spoke both languages. We had expected an energetic, disordered, fiery manner, rather bar-

barian and savage, somewhat in Kean's style. But the great negro tragedian, in order doubtless to appear as civilized as a white man, was quiet, reserved, classic, majestic, recalling strongly Macready. In the final scene his anger did not step beyond proper bounds; he smothered Desdemona with decency and raged afterward with propriety. In a word, as much as one can judge under such conditions, he seemed to have talent rather than genius, science than inspiration. But, however that may be, he scored a great success and was the recipient of boundless applause. A fiercer, more ferocious Othello would probably have succeeded less. After all, Othello lived for a long time among Christians, and the lion of St. Mark must have tamed the lion of the desert.

The repertoire of a negro actor must of necessity be limited to colored plays; but, when one thinks of it, why, since a white comedian stains himself in order to play a black rôle, should not a black comedian powder himself in order to play a white rôle? And that was what happened. Ira Aldridge, the following week, played King Lear in a fashion that produced all desirable illusion. A flesh-colored skull, from which hung a few silvered locks, covered his wool, reaching his eyebrows like a helmet; a piece of wax gave an arch to his flat nose; a thick paste covered his ebony cheeks, and a great snowy beard enveloped the rest of his face and fell over his breast. The transformation was

complete; Cordelia would never have dreamed her father was a negro. Never was the art of disguise pushed further. From caprice, Ira Aldrigge had not whitened his hands, and they showed at the end of his tunic, as brown as a monkey's paws. We thought him better in the rôle of the aged king, persecuted by his wicked daughters, than in that of the Moor of Venice. In the first he was playing; in the last he was Othello himself. He was superb in his indignation and anger, mingled with the feebleness, tremblings, and dreamy helplessness which are natural to an old man who is well-nigh a centenarian, who passes from weakness to madness under the weight of intolerable misfortune. A wonderful thing that showed his mastery over himself, although robust and in the flower of manhood, Ira Aldrigge, never once during the entire evening made a single youthful movement: his voice, his step, his gestures, were all those of an octogenarian.

The success of the ebony tragedian stirred the emulation of Somoïloff, the great Russian comedian, to play in the Alexander Theatre, Othello and King Lear with a truly Shakespearean verve and power. Somoïloff is an actor of genius in the style of Frederick: he is unequal, fantastic, often sublime, full of surprises and inspirations. He is at the same time terrible and burlesque; and if he represents heroes admirably, he plays the rôle of a drunkard as well. He is, too, a man of the world of excellent

manners. Artistic to the end of his fingers, he designs his costumes and draws caricatures that are as witty as he meant them to be. His representations were popular, but not nearly as much so as those of Ira Aldrigge. But then Somoïloff could not turn himself into a negro!

THE STCHOUKINE-DVOR.



### XIII.

#### THE STCHOUKINE-DVOR.

EVERY city has its distant, mysterious quarter, which cannot be seen, even after a long stay, when your habits keep you in the beaten track of the aristocratic streets—its receptacle where are piled up all the debris of luxury, soiled, dirty, shapeless, but still good enough for consumers of the fifth or sixth class. There coquettish little hats wind up their existence, delicate *chefs-d'œuvre* of fashionable modistes, tarnished, greasy, shapeless, only fit to put on the heads of asses; fine black cloth coats, which once, starred with decorations, used to figure in splendid balls; evening dresses thrown the next morning to the maid; the white things turned yellow, the torn laces, the moth-eaten furs, the useless furniture, the humus and stratum of civilization. Paris has its Temple, Madrid its Rastro, Constantinople its louse-bazaar, St. Petersburg its Stechoukine-Dvor—a quarter of rags, that will abundantly repay a visit.

Let us take a sleigh in the Nevsky Prospect, pass the Gostiny-Dvor, a sort of Palais Royal with its galleries lined with fine shops, then say to your *isvochtchik* the sacramental *na leva*, and

after having crossed several streets you have reached your destination.

Enter, if your olfactory nerves are not too delicate, the bazaar for footwear and skins. The strong odor of leather, combined with the mustiness of sour cabbage, makes an entirely local perfume, more pungent to strangers than to Russians, to which it is difficult to grow accustomed; but, when one wishes to see everything, one must not be too dainty.

The shops of Stehoukine-Dvor are made of rough planks; they are sordid holes, made more so that day by the contrast between their filthiness and the immaculate whiteness of the snow that lay in silver folds upon their roofs.

Strings of old boots of coarse leather, and such boots! stiff skins recalling in a sort of grim caricature the form of the beast they one time covered; greasy, ragged touloupes, preserving a vague impress of the human form, formed the composite decoration of their fronts: and all hanging out in the air, touched here and there by patches of snow, assumed under the lowering grey sky an aspect of abject misery. The shop-keepers were scarcely more clean than their wares; and yet, had Rembrandt been there, he would have seized his pencil and made from these bearded men, enveloped in sheepskin, some wonderful water-color, full of character, in spite of its hideous subject. But then art finds material everywhere.

A great number of narrow alleys run into the principal street of the Stehoukine-Dvor. Each quarter is given up to one kind of trade. Several little chapels, whose interiors show by the light of lamps the plaques in crimson and gold of their miniature iconostases, shine at the principal corners. Everywhere else in the Stehoukine-Dvor a light is forbidden: a spark would set fire to this mass of old wood and old things. These gilded shrines in this sombre, miserable spot, flash with peculiar brightness. Buyers and sellers, as they pass them by, make many times the sign of the cross, in the Greek fashion. Some, more devout or less hurried, prostrate themselves in the snow before them, murmur a prayer, and as they rise throw a kopeck in the box at the door. One of the most curious streets is that where religious pictures are sold. If one were not sure of the date, one would fancy himself back in the Middle Ages, so archaic is the style of these pictures, most of which were made but yesterday. Russia keeps up the Byzantine tradition in her pictures with absolute fidelity. These limners might well have served their apprenticeship on Mount Athos, in the convent of Agria Lavria, after the precepts of the manual of painting, compiled by a monk, the pupil of Panselinos, the Raphael of this especial art, in which too exact imitation of nature is regarded as idolatry.

These shops are sown with images from top to

bottom. Brown-haired madonnas copied from the portrait of the Virgin by St. Luke, over gold or silver backgrounds; Christs and saints, all the more appreciated because they are primitively barbarous; paintings representing scenes from the Old and New Testament with a multitude of figures in stiff postures, painted brown and covered with a dark varnish, like Persian cabinets and mirror frames, to simulate the smoke of centuries; bronze plaques, jointed like the leaves of a screen or wings of a triptych, frame a succession of pious bas-reliefs; oxidized silver crosses, of a charming Greco-Byzantine shape, in which a world of tiny figures encircle legends in ancient Slavic and enact the sacred drama of Golgotha; storied book-covers and a myriad other small objects of devotion.

Some of these images, finished with care and richly gilded, are sold at high prices. They have of course very little artistic value, but even the coarsest have wonderful character. The savagery of their shapes, the crudity of their coloring, the mingling of gilding and painting, impress them with a hieratic and solemn *cachet*, perhaps more stimulating to piety than more skillful representations. These images are identical with those revered by their ancestors. Immutable as dogma, they are perpetuated from century to century; art has made for them no progress, and to correct them, in spite of their crudity and naïvety, would seem to them a sacrilege. The blacker, more

smoke-begrimed, stiffer, a Madonna is, the more confidence she inspires in the faithful, whom she regards with her great, dark eyes, fixed as eternity.

It is of course true that the images of Stehoukine-Dvor are like the wood cuts of Épinal in France. The old style takes refuge there. In St. Isaac's and other modern churches or chapels, while the general aspect and consecrated aspect are preserved, the artists have not hesitated to endow the madonnas with all the beauty of which they are capable. They have also stripped the bearded fierce saints of their coat of brown, to give them a natural color. From a scientific point of view that is doubtless much better, but it is by no means certain that the effect from a religious one is as good. The Byzantine-Russian style, with its gold backgrounds, its symmetrical forms, its application of metal and precious stones, is admirably suited to ecclesiastical decoration, it giving a mysterious, supernatural air in harmony with its design.

In one of these shops, we found a little copy of M. Ingres' "Virgin of the Sacrament" arranged as a Greek Madonna. The hands joined in prayer, whose fingers touched each other delicately, had been managed very well in spite of the difficulty of the pose, and the head preserved the likeness of the model. We scarcely expected to find in the Stehoukine-Dvor this souvenir of the illustrious master. By what means did his *chef-d'œuvre* come

to serve as a model for a Russian image? We bought it on the spot. The price was but ten roubles, because there was no gilding on it.

The image-venders are much neater in their dress than are their neighbors the leathersellers. They wear the old Russian costume,—a blue or green cloth blouse, fastened on the shoulder with a button and drawn in at the waist by a narrow belt; thick, black leather boots, hair parted in the middle and falling in long locks over their cheeks, but cut short in the back, not to catch in the collar, and full beards which are curly and chestnut colored. The faces of some are beautiful, serious, intelligent and gentle, and would make capital models for the Christs they sell, if the Byzantine art permitted the imitation of nature in their sacred images. If you stop before their shop-windows, they ask you politely to enter, and no matter how small a trifle you may buy, they show you through all their shop, stopping you, with pride, before the richest or best carved pieces.

Nothing is more curious to the stranger than these absolutely Russian shops. He can very easily be deceived into buying as an antique a very modern article, but in Russia the old is the present, and in all religious matters the same forms are invariably repeated. What connoisseurs, even experts, would take for the work of some Greek monk of the ninth or tenth century often comes from a

neighboring shop, the gold varnish scarcely dry upon it.

It is amusing to notice the naïve and pious admiration of the moujiks who pass through this street, which might be called the sacred street of Stchoukine-Dvor. In spite of the cold, they stand in ecstasy before the madonnas and saints, and dream of possessing such a picture and hanging it, with its lamp, in a corner of their rough pine cabins. But finally they go away, sadly knowing such a purchase is above their means. Some of the richer ones, however, enter, after having felt the little paper roll of roubles in their purse to assure themselves of its proportions, and after lengthy haggling come out carrying their purchase carefully wrapped up. The counting is done in the Chinese fashion, with an abacus, a frame across which wires are stretched, with little balls that are pushed about according to the figures to be added.

Everybody does not go to buy in the Stchoukine-Dvor, but often merely to walk about, and the narrow streets are filled with a motley crowd. The peasant in his touloupe, the soldier in his grey cap, jostle the man of the world in his furs, and the antiquary hoping for a find, which grows constantly more rare, for innocence has fled this bazaar, and for fear of making a mistake the merchants ask extravagant prices for the veriest trifle. Regret for having formerly sold some rare object cheaply, of whose value they were ignorant, has

made them as distrustful as the Auvergnats of the Rue de Lappe. Everything may be found in this great junk-shop; old books have their quarter; French, German, English books, indeed from every part of the world, have found here a resting place in their decay, among torn, worm-eaten, soiled Russian ones. Occasionally a patient investigator finds amid this heap of rubbish a treasure, a first edition, or lost volume, which has reached the Stehoukine-Dvor, after a series of adventures that would furnish the subject for a humorous Odyssey. Some of the booksellers cannot read, which does not, however, prevent them from being thoroughly acquainted with their wares. There are also shops of engravings and colored or black lithographs. There are portraits of Alexander I., of Emperor Nicholas, of grand dukes and duchesses, high dignitaries and generals of preceding reigns, drawn by hands more zealous than skillful, and which would indeed give a strange idea of their august models. As you may fancy, *The Four Seasons*, *the Four Quarters of the Globe*, *The Asking in Marriage*, *The Marriage*, and all its accompanying scenes, in a word all the horrible daubs common to such places, are found here in sufficient abundance.

Among the idlers and buyers, women are in the minority. In France it would be just the other way. Russian women, although not forced to do so, have apparently preserved the Oriental habit









of seclusion and go out rarely. At rare intervals one may catch a glimpse of a peasant-woman, her handkerchief knotted under her chin, her heavy coat fastened like a man's over her thick skirts, her great, unpolished boots plunging into the snow, where they leave footprints that would seem impossible to the most delicate half of the human race; the other women who go into the shops are either Germans or strangers.

In the shops of Stchoukine-Dvor, as in the bazaars of Smyrna and Constantinople, all the sellers are men. We do not remember having seen a Russian woman in a shop.

The street of cheap furniture would furnish matter for a discourse on domestic economy and give much information on Russian family life to him who could decipher from the remains, in various stages of preservation, the history of their former owners; every style is there: old-fashioned pieces are piled up in layers, each epoch having tossed there its useless debris. But the principal things are the great green-leather sofas, a truly Russian piece of furniture.

In another place are trunks, valises and other things necessary to traveling, half buried under the snow as they are piled up in the street. Next come the old pots, broken kettles, cracked porringers, useless utensils without name in any language, rags and tatters, fit for the rag-picker alone. Were it not for the intense cold, a walk in such a

spot would by no means be free of danger, but all the swarming gentry must die in such a temperature.

In warmer weather this danger would have been imminent for us, from the neighborhood of an organ-player, who followed us persistently, in the hope of a few kopeeks, that indolence in opening our pelisse had made us refuse him for some time. The fellow had a droll, peculiar visage. A dirty, frayed rag was bound about his head like an absurd diadem. An old bearskin, once the lap robe of a drosky, covered his shoulders, and resting on the top of the organ, puffed out into a great hump on the poor devil's back. A piece of drugget, cut in scallops at the bottom, and felt boots completed this costume, worthy of Callot.

The boots in themselves told a story of misery and wretchedness. Flabby, shapeless, wrinkled, they half left the foot, and their ends turned up in Chinese points, so that the legs seemed to bend under the weight of the body, and of the organ, as if they had no shin-bones. The poor wretch looked as if he were walking on two sickles.

As for his face, nature had amused herself by modeling it after that of Thomas Vireloque, that puissant creation of Gavarni: an impossible nose flattened out between two prominent cheek bones, above an enormous mouth, amid a network of wrinkles, was the most striking feature, for the coarse hair and beard stiffened with icicles hid the

contour of the face; from under the rough eyebrows shone little, steel-blue eyes full of picturesque and philosophic humor, but the Russian winter had reddened with its bitter north wind this copy in flesh and rags of a Parisian picture. He looked like a tomato enveloped in oakum.

As its master turned the handle, the organ under the bearskin groaned sadly, seemed to ask pardon, sighed, coughed asthmatically and squeaked as if it were choking; it murdered with its few remaining keys two or three airs of another century, trembling, shaking, with a sad merriment, false enough to make the dogs howl, but touching in spite of all, like a refrain of the olden time murmured by the broken voice and halting breath of an aged grandmother returned once more to childhood. These ghosts of songs end by inspiring a sort of fear.

Sure of the effect of his instrument, and seeing that he had to deal with a stranger, for a Russian would not have tolerated such a thing, the rascal, with the volubility of a monkey, kept on turning the handle as if his life depended upon it. When he had made himself sufficiently intolerable, a handful of copper pieces silenced him; he received the kopecks with a smile, and, as a proof of his gratitude, stopped short the waltz he had just begun. The organ hushed with a sigh of satisfaction.

We have described the most picturesque side

of the Stehoukine-Dvor: it was the most amusing to us. It contains also covered galleries, lined with shops full of food of every sort—smoked fish for the long Greek Lent, olives, butter, white as that in Constantinople, which comes from Odessa, green apples, red berries, from which tarts are made; new furniture, clothes, footwear, stuffs and jewelry in common use. All this is curious, but is nothing like so interesting as this Oriental bazaar scattered in the midst of the snow.

ZICHY.



## XIV.

### ZICHY.

IF, when you are in St. Petersburg you take a walk on the Nevsky Prospect—and it is as difficult to avoid doing so as it is when you are in Venice not to go to the Square of St. Mark, or in Naples to the Toledo, or in Madrid to the Puerta del Sol, or in Paris to the Boulevard des Italiens—you will doubtless notice Beggrow's shop. Here the sidewalk is always full of curious people, who are staring at the pictures, water-colors, engravings, photographs, statuettes and even paint-boxes, in spite of the bitter temperature. The vapor from their breaths is frozen into a little motionless cloud above their heads, to which you will add your own little contribution while awaiting, in order to reach the window, the place of some spectator who suddenly remembers with a start that he has something to do at the other end of the town beyond the Anitschkov Bridge or on the other side of the river in the distant Vassili-Ostrov. If, however, you are not yet thoroughly acclimated, or are frightened by the severity of the weather, turn the knob of the door and enter quite fearlessly the sanctuary. Beggrow is

a young man of charming manners and perfect breeding, who, even should you desire to purchase nothing, will receive you with exquisite politeness, and show you his treasures with delight. The artist, the man of the world, the man of letters, the amateur, go there, as in Paris they go to Desforges; they turn the leaves of the albums, examine the newest engravings, rejoice in the beautiful, and learn all the art news.

One day, as we were examining some photographs there, our gaze was forcibly attracted towards a large water-color, on an easel in the corner, by its warm brilliant coloring, although the twilight was falling; but very frequently paintings, especially when they are good, flash out in wonderful effects at that time. It would almost seem that they retain and concentrate for a moment the light which is departing.

Approaching, we found ourselves before a *chef-d'œuvre* that we were quite unable to attribute to any known master, and yet that any of them would have gladly claimed. It was neither Bonington, nor Louis Boulanger, nor yet Delacroix, Decamps, Lewis, nor any of those artists who carry into water-color the strength and richness of oil. It was an entirely new manner, a treatment of the most original, a surprise, a discovery, a brand unclassified in the world of art, yet equal to the best, of a richness, a bouquet, a flavor unknown, but exquisite.

It represented a Florentine orgy of the Sixteenth century. Some old men, brevetted libertines, ancient wrecks of the smart world, were taking supper with two young demi-mondaines. On the disordered table were exquisite ewers, vases, bonbon-holders, and spice-boxes carved in the manner of Benvenuto Cellini; in glass and flagon flashed ruby and topaz-colored wine, while some fruit had fallen from an enamelled dish. In the background, through a sort of transparent shadow, glimpses could be caught of groups of figures, tapestries, sideboards, carved cabinets. Long brocaded curtains fell in dull, rich folds, and the ceiling suggested, rather than showed, gilded and richly colored arabesques. The figures, by their ease of movement, the variety of their attitudes, their chance poses, bold perspective, and the freedom and purity of design, gave evidence of a talent, long sure of itself, formed from long study mingled with the innate sense of true art, and showing the body under every aspect, even those impossible to a model to give, with that puissant force of the true master. The young women, in their giddy toilettes, were laughing and lolling with the factitious gaiety of the courtesan, though, under the laughter and the paint, fatigue, disenchantment and ennui were apparent.

One, turning slightly away, seemed to be thinking of the lover of her youth, of the years of past innocence; the other, in a mad abandonment, was

trying to pull off the wig of a superannuated libertine, who was kneeling at her feet with the gallantry of a former time; but the power of the yellow metal controlled their every fancy, and from their complaisant poses, full of hidden deference, it was very apparent that to women of that sort men of wealth are never completely ridiculous, no matter how old or ugly they may be. For the rest, the noblemen, in spite of the marks of age and debauch, rendered but more visible by the efforts made to conceal them, had an unmistakable grand air, with their costumes of extreme elegance, recalling the charming fashions of Vittore Carpaccio, whose juvenile designs look so out of place on worn, bony or heavy bodies. In their plastered wrinkles could be read more than one thought worthy of Machiavelli, and the wicked satisfaction of the blasé old man who was profaning for gold the delicate blossoms of beauty and youth. Some seemed as happy as snails on roses; others confessed by their worn air the irreparable sadness of a nature worn out by vice; and all was permeated with a coloring, a grace, a touch, a skill nothing short of marvelous, to which was joined a tiny well-managed touch of caricature, for painting is a serious matter, and a grimace grows quickly insupportable.

In the corner of this *chef-d'œuvre* was written a queer name, Hungarian in form, and Italian in sound: "Zichy."

As we were enthusiastically expressing our admiration, Beggrow answered simply: "Yes, it is Zichy," finding it quite a matter of course that Zichy should produce a magnificent water-color; and he opened a portfolio containing several sepias of the youthful master, so varied, so opposed in character, that they readily might have issued from different hands.

The first was the saddest, most pathetic scene: a poor family lost on the steppe; at the foot of a mass of ice, an unhappy woman, worn with fatigue, overcome with cold, beaten by the wind, blinded with snow, sought a temporary, though insufficient refuge. To that irresistible desire to sleep, which is really freezing and not sleep, has succeeded death; the nose is pinched, the eyelids closed, the mouth fixed in a last frozen sigh. Near the mother is lying a little dead child, half enveloped in a rag, drawn with an incredible hardihood and success of perspective. A lad of perhaps fourteen, stronger and better able to resist the fatal torpor, huddles in agony close to his mother; beside himself with fear, with passionate tenderness and wild terror, he calls her, shakes her, tries to arouse her from that obstinate sleep he cannot understand. One feels that he has never seen death before, and yet by his overwhelming fear and horror he divines what it is. Soon this adored mother will inspire fear, like a ghost; her body

will be stiff; but then the snowy shroud will have covered them all.

Next comes the wife of the doge Marino Faliero, listening dreamily to a youthful virtuoso playing the dulcimer for her in a rich Venetian apartment, opening upon a balcony with little columns and carvings in the Lombardic or Moorish style. Zichy, like Gustave Doré, possesses a profound sentiment for the Middle Ages: he knows all about its architecture, its furniture, armor, costumes, forms, which he reproduces, not by painful, archaic labor, but freely and lightly, as if the models were standing before his eyes, or as if he had lived with them in intimate friendship. He does not bring out, as does Doré, the grotesque or fantastic element, but prefers the elegant side, always however avoiding the troubadour, chivalric style of Marchangy.

A third design completely captivated us. The first two recalled to one the pathos and sentiment of Ary Scheffer, the other the pictures of Chasseriau of "The Moor of Venice" and neither of them bore the least resemblance to the "Florentine Orgy." The one we were now looking at made us think of the best and most spirited sepias of Gavarni. It was an officer of "Chasseurs d'Afrique" (French colonial troops) about to rejoin his regiment, and receiving with a more than martial indifference the adieus of a too tender beauty, who was weeping and sobbing on his shoulder, in a pose of suffering

that was wonderfully pathetic. The spahis, Ulysses-like, about to depart, and habituated to the complaints of the Calypsos left behind in the islands of the garrisons, was submitting to the warm shower of tears upon his shoulder, with a bored, patient, dull air, flicking with his little finger the ash from his cigarette and turning his foot inside, like a man who does not care how he stands. It is difficult to describe the finesse, spirit, and dash of this little sketch, made with a master touch on a little scrap of common paper.

The next drawing of Zichy is in yet an utterly different style. An old man has married a beautiful though poor young girl and the hour for retiring having arrived, the husband removes a piece at a time of his decrepit body. The wig, removed, exposes a shining bald cranium, as polished as those of the Trappists; the glass eye, placed in a cup of water, produces that dark cavity in which the grave-worm spins his thread; the set of teeth, thrown on a side-table, grinds its teeth horribly together, and simulates the laughter of the dead. Nothing can be more hideous than this bony laugh, separated from the head, deprived of lips, and making merry, all alone in its corner. It calls to mind that terrible vision of Edgar Allan Poe of the teeth of Berenice.

The poor child, who thought she had only married an old man, and who had overcome her maiden repugnance by the thought of an aged mother liv-

ing in comfort and a younger sister saved from vice, recoiled affrighted at the sight of the bony skeleton, more than ready for the tomb, who was extending his trembling, gouty hands towards her. As she stood in the middle of the room, the light of the lamp threw into relief the pure, graceful contour of her own loveliness. All that under another hand might savor of vulgarity disappears behind the delicacy of detail and originality of effect. If, to give an idea of this unknown painter, we have been forced to seek analogies, do not for an instant imagine there is anything like imitation about him. Zichy's nature is so genial that he draws everything to himself; he has never met in the paths of art those masters to whom we have compared him, and many of their names have never even come to his ears.

"How is it," we said to Beggrow, "that Zichy has never sent anything to the World's Exposition; that we have never seen any composition of his engraved nor ever met any of his pictures or drawings in any collection? Does Russia jealously keep to herself alone the secret and monopoly of this superb, new, and wonderful talent?"

"Yes," composedly replied Beggrow, "Zichy works mostly for the court and city; none of his designs remain long in my shop, and it is only by chance that you have seen several together. The frames were not ready. The 'Florentine Orgy' will be taken away to-night, so that you saw it just

in time." We left the place, and like La Fontaine, who, astonished at a lecture of Baruch's he had just heard, stopped everybody with the words: "Have you read Baruch?" we began every conversation with the phrase: "Do you know Zichy?"

"Certainly we do," was the invariable answer, and one day M. Lwoff, director of the Conservatory of Design, said to us: "If you care to know Zichy, it is a pleasure that can be easily managed."

There is in St. Petersburg a kind of club that is called, "The Friday Society;" it is composed of artists who, as the name indicates, assemble on Friday of every week; it has no particular habitation, but each member in turn receives his confrères, until the list of names is exhausted, when it begins over again.

Shaded lamps are ranged along a long table, covered with vellum, paper, card-board, pencils, crayons, water-colors, sepia, India-ink, or as M. Scribe would say, "with everything one can draw with." Every member takes his place and must execute during the evening a drawing, sketch, little painting or something that belongs to the Society, whose sale or placing in the lottery forms a fund for unfortunate artists, or those temporarily in need of assistance. Cigars and papyros (the name for cigarettes in St. Petersburg) bristle like arrows in a quiver, in carved wooden horns placed between the desks, so that each one, without interrupting his work, can take out a Havana or cig-

alette, whose smoke soon blurs the landscape or figure in course of execution. Glasses of tea, with little cakes, are handed about; every now and then they stop to rest and chat and to drink more tea. Those who do not feel inspired rise and watch the work of the others, and often return to their places fired with emulation and illumined with sudden light.

Towards one o'clock in the morning a light supper is served, which is distinguished by the frankest cordiality and enlivened by discussions on art, stories of travel, witty paradoxes, gay jokes, or some of those caricatures, often so true to life, which the constant observation of nature, necessary to the artist, teaches, that provoke peals of laughter; then everyone goes home, having done something good,—sometimes even a *chef-d'œuvre*—and having been amused, which do not always go together.

We had the honor of being admitted into the "Friday Society," and at one of these reunions we saw Zichy for the first time.

The "Friday" was held that evening in the Vassili-Ostrov quarter, at the studio of Lavazzari, a cosmopolitan painter, who had seen and drawn everything. Water-color paintings, in which we recognized the Alhambra, the Parthenon, Venice, Constantinople, the pylones of Karnak, the tombs of Lycia, covered the walls, half-hidden by the

gigantic leaves of tropical plants, that flourish in the hothouse temperature of Russian homes.

A young man of thirty-one or two, with long blonde hair, falling in disordered curls, grey-blue eyes, full of fire and spirit, a light slightly curly beard, and charming, gentle face, was standing near a table, arranging his paper, brushes and glass of water, and replying with a silvery laugh, a true child's laugh, to the pleasantry of a comrade. This was Zichy.

We were introduced. We expressed as best we could the lively admiration with which the "Florentine Orgy," and his drawings that we had seen at Beggrow's, had inspired us. He listened in visible pleasure, for he could not doubt our sincerity, mingled with a modest surprise, that was not in the least feigned.

He seemed to ask himself: "Am I really so great a man as that?" Not that Zichy is unaware of his talent, but he does not attach the importance to it which it merits. He believes what he does so easily is easy, and he is rather astonished that people should go into ecstasies over a thing that has not cost him more than three or four hours of work, while he smoked and chatted. It does not take long to impress the stamp of genius—when it is there; and Zichy has genius.

He paid us the compliment of improvising a composition on a subject, taken from "Le Roi Candaule," one of our recent antiques, which has

already had the honor of inspiring Pradier with a statue and Gérôme with a painting. The moment chosen was that in which Nyssia introduces Gyges into her chamber and herself assists in plunging the dagger into the breast of the sleeping king. Under the sure, rapid hand of the artist, a splendid Greco-Asiatic interior was created as if by enchantment. The superb Heraclide has sunk on his cushions, and Nyssia, white and slender as a statue cut from Parian marble, has given the signal for the murder; Gyges advances with tiger-like step, convulsively pressing the cold steel against his breast. The pencil went on unhesitatingly, as if it were copying an invisible model. All this while the other "Friday-members" were working away with wonderful enthusiasm and celerity. Svertchkov was drawing, in colored crayon, a horse with his head leaning lovingly against his companion's neck. Like Horace Vernet, like Alfred de Dreux, and Achille Giroux, Svertchkov excels in portraying blooded horses; he knows to a nicety the springs of their nervous flanks, the intertwin- ing of the veins on their smoking necks, the secret of flashing eye-ball and nostril; but he has a weak- ness for the little Ukraine horse, ungroomed, hairy, uncared for, the poor peasant's horse. He paints him harnessed to a rosposnik, a téléga or a sleigh, going through the ice or snow, or the pine forests, whose branches are bent with snow. One feels how he loves these brave little animals, so sober,

so patient, so courageous, so inured to fatigue; he is the Sterne of these excellent beasts, and that page of "The Sentimental Journey," on the ass that ate the leaf of an artichoke, is not more touching than are some of his sketches. Next we ran across Pharamond Blanchard, who was busily engaged with a sketch in sepia of a little cascade boiling and foaming among rocks; he was an old friend, with whom we had passed many an agreeable hour in Madrid, Smyrna, Constantinople; and here in St. Petersburg, after six years, we met again. Popaf, the Russian Teniers, was sketching with charming naïveté a scene of peasants drinking tea; Lavazzari was leading a cart drawn by oxen through the narrow streets of an Eastern town, while Charlemagne, the creator of those exact, true views of St. Petersburg, was adding, on his own authority, an island in Lake Maggiore and covering it with fairy-like buildings, enough to ruin the Borromeo princes, notwithstanding their riches.

A little further on, Lwoff, the director of the Conservatory of Design, was flooding with glowing sunshine the public square of Tiflis. Prince Maxintoff was dashing off a corps of firemen seen in perspective, before whom the droskies were scattering in haste, pressing their wheels against the walls. An Italian, who knew how to infuse into his warm, transparent water-colors the charm of the piazza of Venice, was painting the wharf of the Admiralty and the Canal of Fontanka

charmingly and portraying in all the magic of Oriental coloring the Byzantines of the Kremlin and its churches, striped like Hindoo pagodas. Premazzi had chosen the round, delicately pillared porch of a convent. Hoch was painting a female head, into whose pure Roman type he had infused a certain Germanic grace. Rühl, with a little black-lead and piece of cotton, was dashing in with lightning rapidity pictures in the style of Gudins and Aïvasovkys. Rühl, after supper, transformed himself into a musician, running his skillful fingers over the piano and delighting us with the last opera and one of his own composition.

Our turn came next, for no idler is admitted into the society, except M. Mussard, who is excused from doing anything, in consideration of his taste, his wit, his science, on the express condition that he will talk.

A crayon head, that some little flowers and wisps of straw in the hair could make pass for Ophelia, was indulgently received into the collection, and the little Friday assembly insisted upon treating us as one of themselves. At every reunion we had our place at the painting table, and our daubs helped to swell the common portfolio.

Zichy was working away at his design, and just beginning to put in the play of light and shadow, which he manages with so exquisite a touch, when supper was announced. A dish of macaroni, deliciously juicy and savory, occupied the place of

honor, a charming Italian profile, hung on the wall, explaining perhaps its classic perfection.

The following morning we received a letter from Zichy, in which he announced that, having reread "Le Roi Candaule," he had torn his picture into a thousand bits,—the barbarian, the vandal!

At the same time, he invited us to dine with him, in order to show us, while awaiting the soup, things more worthy of being seen, and capable of justifying in a small degree the good opinion we had formed of him. In the letter was also a little plan he had drawn to help us find his house, a very necessary precaution in view of our utter ignorance of Russian. With the assistance of the plan, and the four words that form most of the dialogue between the stranger and the cabman—"Preama" (go on), "na prava" (to the right), "na leva" (to the left), "stoi" (stop)—we successfully reached the Vosnesensky bridge, near which Zichy lives.

In spite of the reserve we have always maintained during our travels, we will take the reader with us into Zichy's home, since we may do so without breach of hospitality. If one should close tightly the door of an intimate friend, it is allowable to leave the door of the studio ajar, and we feel sure Zichy will pardon us for bringing visitors who have not been regularly presented.

In Russia every apartment has a sort of vestibule, where the visitor takes off his pelisse and

gives it to a servant, who hangs it upon a peg; then one unbuckles one's galoches, as in the Orient one removes one's slippers before entering a mosque. The row of shoes that so greatly surprised Parisians in Gérôme's picture, the "Prières des Arnautes," is seen here in every ante-chamber, if the master of the house is famous, powerful, or charming. As you may fancy, there is always an abundant display of footwear in Zichy's vestibule. But on that day no galoche, nor furred boot, nor felt shoe was ranged under the cloak-rack; Zichy had excused himself to the world, in order that we might talk freely together.

We first crossed a rather large drawing-room, one wall of which was covered with superb trophies of the chase. Guns, carbines, knives, pouches, powder horns were hanging from the heads of deer, amid the skins of lynx, fox, and wolf—Zichy's victims or models. One might fancy himself in the home of a great hunter or sportsman, had not a painting, full of shadows *à la* Rembrandt, and representing a prophet in his cave, or a proof engraving of Paul Delaroche's "Hemicycle," by Dupont, and the "Smala" of Horace Vernet, in black and white, together with certain empty frames awaiting a canvas, told that one was surely in the home of an artist.

Vases containing hothouse plants were placed near the windows, doubtless in order to keep up the tradition of green, that disappears in Russia

for eight months of the year, and that a painter, more than any one else, needs to preserve.

In the middle of the room stood the great round table for the Friday work. A second, much smaller room, came next. A divan ran along two sides, terminating in a corner in the back of the room, against one of those exquisite open-work screens, like the grille of a choir, a *chef-d'œuvre* of the national wood carving, where wood like wrought iron is bent in curves, volutes, arabesques, trefoils, and caprices of every sort; ivy and other climbing plants, whose roots were hidden in jardinières, hung their natural foliage over the sculptured foliage, producing the most charming effect in the world. With the aid of these charming partitions one can be isolated in well-nigh any part of a room; a bed-chamber, a cabinet, a boudoir can be arranged; one shuts oneself up without being shut off, and can at the same time enjoy the general atmosphere of the apartment.

On consoles, formed by the jutting out of carvings, were placed two delicious little statues of Pollet, the "Morning Star" and "Night," and through the carvings one caught glimpses of characteristic costumes of Tcherghesses, Lesghines, Circassians and Cossacks hanging on the walls, forming in the uncertain light a warm, rich background, that showed the fine open work of the partitions to perfection.

On the side walls we noticed the "Defeat of the

Huns'' and ''The Destruction of Jerusalem,''' magnificent German engravings, from Kaulbach's frescoes on the stairs of the Museum in Berlin, placed above a row of medallions in pastel; portraits of the members of the ''Friday Club,''' by Zichy; and on the other side was Delaroche's ''Assassination of the Duke of Guise,''' a few sketches, plaster casts and other trifles.

At the end of the room, where Zichy received us, our gaze was attracted to a child's armor, placed on the mantel-piece, where ordinary people put a clock. The usual mirror place was occupied most successfully by a panoply of arms in which flashed weapons of every kind, blades of Toledo, blue swords of Damaseus, the fissaqs of Kabail, yataghans, creeses, daggers, long-barrelled guns, their stocks incrustated with turquoises and coral. A second one made up of quivers, bows, pistols, Georgian helmets, with mailed neck pieces, steel nargiles from Khorassan, forks with Persian handles, African zagaies, all those innumerable objects gathered by a lover of the picturesque, covered one entire side of a room. Zichy is a frequenter of the Stehoukine-Dvor of St. Petersburg and of Moscow; in Constantinople he fairly lives in the bazaar of arms; it is his passion. He searches, he buys, barter, exchanges for sketches; some are given to him; and in whatever way he unearths a barbarian, fierce or outlandish weapon, he ends by making it his own. Pointing to all this

bric-a-brac, Zichy can say with Rembrandt: "Here are my antiques!"

Another side of the room is occupied by a polyglot library, which bears witness to the taste and knowledge of the artist, who reads in the original the *chefs-d'œuvre* of well-nigh every European literature. The two remaining sides are pierced with windows, for the room is in the corner of the house, and contains in the spaces between windows a mass of little ornaments we will not describe.

But, you are probably saying, bored with this rather lengthy description, you promised to take us to Zichy's studio, and so far you have but made an inventory of several rooms, more or less picturesquely furnished.

It is not for lack of good will, but Zichy has no studio, nor has any other artist in St. Petersburg. The matter of painting has not been provided for in this city, although it is the Athens of the North; property owners have never given it a thought, so art finds a lodging-place where it can, seeking often in vain for a corner for an easel and a good light; and yet neither land nor means of building are lacking.

Zichy was at work on a corner of a table, near a window, taking advantage eagerly of the little remaining daylight of a dull day. He was making a large drawing in India ink, that was to be engraved. It was Werther just before committing suicide. Charlotte's virtuous lover, having con-

demned his love as impossible and culpable, was preparing to execute the sentence passed upon him by himself.

On a table covered with a cloth, the tribunal before which he had seated himself, to deliberate upon his own cause, Werther, the judge of Werther, was burning a half-extinguished lamp, the witness of his night's struggle. The artist had represented Werther standing, like a magistrate pronouncing a verdict, with tightly compressed lips, his hand, the delicate hand of the dreamer and idler, seeking among the papers for the trigger of the pistol.

The head, illumined from above by the light of the lamp, wore the scornful serenity of expression of a man sure of escaping henceforth from all moral doubts, looking already at the life on the other side. Every one knows how little aid the powder, crimped hair and fashions of 1789 give to tragedy. And yet Zichy had managed to give to Werther, in defiance of the vignettes of the time and the celebrated blue frock-coat, an ideal creation, that was poetic and full of style. The effect was worthy of Rembrandt: the light from above threw unexpected lights and shadows upon objects, enveloping them with realistic magic: behind Charlotte's lover a phantom-like shadow reached to the ceiling. The ghost seemed to be standing there, ready to take the place of the man about to disappear. It was incredible that such



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**Tomb of Peter the Great**

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depth and power could be obtained with only India ink, which is generally so cold.

As we have already said, Zichy's nature is many-sided: you fancy you know him and assign such a rank, manner, genre to him; suddenly he places under your eyes a new work that upsets all your preconceived notions.

Who would have expected, after the Werther, three large water-colors representing the fox, wolf, and lynx, whose skins were hanging in the salon, which he had killed with his own hand? Neither Barye, nor Jadin, nor Delacroix could have done better. This talent alone would have sufficed in Paris to have rendered its possessor illustrious, and it is one of Zichy's least; there is a truth of tone, a knowledge of position, a freedom of touch, a happiness of portrayal, a comprehension of each nature, that is simply incredible. Each animal has kept in death his own nature.

The fox, with half closed eyes, slender muzzle and wrinkled throat, appeared to be meditating some last ruse, in which he had failed. The wolf shows his teeth and gums, as if trying to bite the ball which had pierced him. The lynx is magnificent, in ferocity, revolt, and impotent rage; his lips drawn back to his glazed eyes in a grimace frightful to behold, as if he were bursting with sardonic laughter; he might have been a savage brave, betrayed to his death by a white man, by means of a weapon of which he was ignorant, and

with his last breath covering him with contempt.

Each one of his water-colors required but a day to accomplish. The rapid decay of the models required that promptitude, which is not at all difficult to Zichy. His eye is so sure, his hand so certain, that every stroke tells. After this if you class Zichy as an animal painter you will be absolutely wrong; he is quite as much an historical painter. Examine these magnificent pen compositions, representing ancient Muscovite battles, and the establishment of Christianity in Russia, works of his youth, when he still felt the influence of his German master, Waldmuller. If you were told that these drawings, so beautiful in style, so heroic in pose, so fertile in invention, were Kaulbach's you would not be surprised. We even very much doubt if Kaulbach could have thrown into the adjustment of the Tartar warriors such fierce, unusual savagery, for here the lack of historic documents allowed the fancy of the painter full latitude. These carefully executed drawings only need to be enlarged to make excellent cartoons for the walls of a palace or public monument in fresco.

What would you say if to these severe compositions, which, exposed in Goupil's window, engraved in the style of Cornelius or Overbeck, looked as if they had surely come from the grave Düsseldorf school, should succeed a delicate fantasy, a dream of impossible love, enveloped in azure, carried away by a creature in flowing, curl-

ing locks, done with a pencil as dainty and airy as Vidal's? A rose cloud, modelled on the sky by the breath of unbridled caprice? Good! you will say; our young artist is a modern Watteau, a Boucher with English elegance and the graces of the book of beauty; Robinson and Finden claim him as their own. Again the judgment would be hasty, for Zichy, laughing with his own fresh, childlike laugh, would draw from his portfolio a sombre sepia drawing, improvised one evening under the lamp, which equals in sinister vigor the most violent and dramatic masters.

The scene is laid in a cemetery; it is night. The feeble light of the moon scarce penetrates the heavy bank of storm clouds. Black wooden crosses, funereal monuments, columns cut off or surmounted with urns veiled in crape, the genii of death extinguishing underfoot the torch of life—all the lugubrious varieties of sepulchral architecture raise their dark outlines against the mysterious, terrible horizon.

In the foreground two pickaxes are planted in the unused ground. An awful trio is busied with a nameless work, like Macbeth's witches. Tomb riflers, hyenas with men's faces, are despoiling the graves, to snatch from the dead their last treasures, the woman's gold ring, the child's silver rattle, the locket of the lover, the reliquary of the saint, and have dug up a rich coffin, whose velvet, silver-trimmed top, half open, shows a young

girl whose head is reposing on a lace pillow. The shroud pulled away discloses her chin resting on her breast, in the eternal meditation of death; an arm folded over a heart that will never beat again, and that a worm is already nibbling. One of the thieves, with a vile convict face, a filthy cap upon his head, holds a piece of a candle, which he is shading with his hand against the night wind. The trembling light falls, livid and wan, over the pallor of death. Another bandit, half buried in the grave, whose fierce features give him the aspect of some loathsome beast, lifts in his claws the soft waxen hand that the dead, in the indifference of the grave, may not refuse. With touch rude enough to shatter it, he seizes the third finger and snatches from it a ring of price, doubtless her nuptial ring! A third rascal, watching on the mound of a new-made grave, listens, his hat twisted into an acoustic horn, to the barking of a distant dog roused by the movements of the band, or to the soft footfall of a watchman on his round. The most ignoble fear distorts the shadowed face, and his filthy, creased trousers, clammy with the dews of night, covered with the clay of the cemetery, betray the monkey-like limbs and movements. Romantic horror could not be carried further. This drawing all Paris shall see, for it is ours. Zichy has given it. It is his chief work and a *chef-d'œuvre* it is indeed.

On contemplating it, one thinks of the "Laza-

rus" of Rembrandt, the "Suicide" of Decamps, of "Hamlet and the grave-diggers" of Delacroix, nor does it lose anything by comparison. What magical light and shade, what puissant effects, obtained by simple methods! On the front a little red sepia, in the back some dashes of India ink! The richest palette could not produce more stupendous results.

To this frightful scene, which at first sight looks like a repast of ghouls, the artist opposes "A Bacchante Surprised by a Satyr," of so pure, so antique a style, that you ask yourself, from what intaglio, cameo, or fresco of Pompeii, from what Greek vase, is this lovely group taken. From antiquity we descend into the Middle Ages, with a composition of "The Jewish Martyrs." In this drawing, which is very great, Zichy has included in a subtle, picturesque manner, the two-fold persecution, political and religious, which, under pretense of avenging the death of a God, has been kindled against the unhappy people of Israel.

At the back of a cellar or rather underground back-shop, which is but a precarious, uncertain hiding-place, a Jewish family is huddled together, the picture of desolation and terror. The solid doors of the cellar, in spite of their bars, bolts and locks, have given way under outside force, and their leaves, wrested from their hinges, are lying on the steps. A flood of sunlight penetrates the mysterious retreat, betraying every secret. The spiritual and temporal power appears on the top

step; in refulgent glory the cross and the sword shine before the dazzled eyes of the poor Jews discovered in their refuge. From the midst of the tumultuous squad of soldiers the procession of monks advances, gently impassible, quietly fanatical, implacable as dogma. The judge, the seigneur, the feudal baron, have supplied the material force and delivered the bodies; the inquisition is about to take possession of the souls. The church is there haughty and superb in its lace, as stiff as a cuirass, the very personification of the Middle Ages. The broad, square face of the monk, in spite of its flesh, possesses an irresistible power, carrying its tonsured crown like a diadem. One feels that he represents a great idea. From behind, the common face of a beadle bends forward and gazes with eyes full of hate and curiosity at the frail human covey surprised in the nest and trembling like a dove under the claw of the hawk. This man, without being more wicked than most, would go to the auto-da-fé and burst into laughter at the sight of the flesh crisping amid the flames. But the really terrible figure of the picture, in whom the whole idea is concentrated, is a monkish spectre in grave-clothes, a ghoul amid the shadows of the background swallowing a livid, macerated head, as terrible as the monk in the "St. Basil" of Herrera the Elder. His thin, bony nose shines like the beak of a hawk. Yellow sparks flash from under his cowl showing the eyes, whither the life

of this dead face has taken refuge; from this living death's-head, covered with skin, in which so many hot passions ferment, emanates the single thought creating the picture.

The father of the family, a majestic Jew, whose features recall the Bible prophets, seeing all hope lost, has drawn himself up to his full height. He will not stoop to useless falsehoods, and his half-open robe shows a glimpse, over his heart, of the phylacteries, on which are written, in Hebrew, verses from the Old Testament and the Talmud. He will confess his faith, the ancient faith of Abraham and Jacob, and, a crownless martyr, will die for Jehovah, who is also the God of his persecutors. His wife, once as lovely as Rachel, but whose noble countenance has been worn by fright and grief, turns around, with clasped hands and closed eyes, so she may not behold the terrible scene. On her lap her little grandson lies fast asleep in the peaceful slumber of infancy, amid this tumult, a babe as beautiful as the Infant Jesus in his cradle. The young mother, as beautiful as an angel, has sunk fainting, her hair dishevelled, her arms helpless, without thought or strength or volition, mad with terror. Her pure Hebrew type embodies the fairest possible dream of Rebecca in "Ivanhoe."

In front, in a posture of the boldest perspective, a lad, petrified with fear, has rolled. In the background stands the grandfather, in whom are con-

centrated all the sordid instincts of his race; he is striving to hide behind his trembling old hands and bowed body the vases of gold and silver that Israel never forgets to carry out of Egypt; in this supreme moment he has but one thought—to save his money!

The execution of this design is at the same time bold and fine, and stump and crayon are the means used. Luminous silver lights form fine contrasts to velvet blacks, as in beautiful English engravings. “The Jewish Martyrs” would make a magnificent engraving, which is indeed its destination.

If Meissonier were to take to water-colors, he would work as Zichy does. We once saw of his a *lansquenet*, twirling his long mustaches as he sat at a table, upon which he had placed his helmet, near a pot of beer and glass which he had just emptied. It would about cover a snuff box, of the kind Frederick the Great used to carry; but do not fancy it was done with the delicate touches of the miniature; all was dashed in, with bold touches of rare ease and firmness. The hand that twirled the mustache was a *chef-d'œuvre*; the finger tips, bones, nails, nerves, veins, even the rough reddened skin, were there. The cuirass shone with metallic lustre, and the sword had made a bluish mark on the side of his buff trousers. The point of light, the pupil, the iris, in the soldier's eyes, which were no larger than the head of a pin, could be easily discerned.

Not a single detail of his face, reddened by the sun and wind, was omitted. His microscopic features have the blearness and power of a life-sized oil painting, and after looking at it for a few minutes one knows his character by heart. He is brutal and good-natured, deceitful, drunken, thievish.

No one resembles Meissonier less than Eugène Lami; Zichy reproduces both equally well, although he has never seen either of these artists. The diversity of his talent and the needs of the subject alone taught him these different styles. The sketches of his water-colors, representing the scenes at the coronation, are marvels of wit, grace and aristocratic elegance. Never has a painter of "high life" portrayed with more richness and pomp, cortéges, ceremonies, and gala representations; the pencil of the artist sparkles when it expresses the brilliant, joyous tumult of the fêtes; it becomes grave when it paints the interior of Byzantine churches with their golden mosaics and velvet draperies which form but the background for august and sacred heads.

The sketch of the official play in the theatre of Moscow is one of the most impossible pieces of adroit juggling imaginable; the point of perspective is taken from the balcony, and the curved lines of the balconies are given, full of women covered with jewels, and great personages with orders and crosses; points of white and yellow color, dashed into the body-color, make an effect of gold and jewels. Certain faces are painted in with pre-

cision to give historic value, and they are all surrounded by an atmosphere of golden, jewelled, ardent magnificence—the atmosphere of lights, so difficult to render in painting.

Now in order to complete the evolution we will show you Zichy as he rivals Grant, Landseer, Jadin, Alfred de Dreux, and all other animal painters. Our artist made for a magnificent hunting-book, presented to the emperor of Russia, historic frames in the most exquisite taste. On each page is a space in which is inscribed the number of pieces killed, disposed in such a manner as to leave free an ample margin. On each of these margins the artist has drawn a different hunting-scene, surmounting with wonderful ingenuity the difficulty presented by the frame. There is a bear chase, a lynx, an elk, a wolf, a hare, prairie-fowl, thrush, snipe hunt, all with their own especial attributes and the spots where they are found; sometimes it is a snow scene, again a fog, a dawn or a twilight, a thicket or a prairie, according to the habits or dwelling-place of the animal. Wild beasts, furred or feathered ones, blooded horses and dogs, guns, knives, powder-horns, spears, nets, every article of the hunt, are portrayed with an incredible lightness, truth and exactitude and with a delicacy of tone that does not outstep ornament and harmonizes with the silver, red, or blue colorings of the landscape. Each hunt is led by a great lord whose head, not larger than one's nail, is a delicious

portrait in miniature. The album is ended by a piece of wit, in the best possible taste. Among the Nimrods, great hunters before the Lord, was included Count A——, who does not hunt at all. Zichy has represented him descending the steps of the palace and coming to meet the emperor, who is returning from the chase. So he figures in the album and no violence is done to the truth.

But we must stop, for we have talked long enough, although we have not said half enough. The hunting-book, containing fifteen or twenty leaves, itself merits an entire article, and there are a number of pictures which we have not even mentioned. But Zichy, like Gustave Doré, is a marvel of genius, a *portentum*, to make use of a Latin expression, a crater always in an eruption of talent. Our chapter is indeed incomplete, but we have written enough to make it understood that Zichy is one of the most astonishing individualities that have appeared since 1830, that climacteric epoch of art.



ST. ISAAC'S.



## XV.

### ST. ISAAC'S.

WHEN the traveler approaches St. Petersburg, through the Gulf of Finland, the first object that catches his eye is the dome of St. Isaac's, towering over the city like a golden mitre. If the sky is clear, the atmosphere flooded with sunshine, the effect is magnificent. This first impression is the right one and should never be abandoned. The church of St. Isaac's takes the foremost rank among the religious edifices ornamenting the capital of all the Russias. Of modern construction, recently built, it may be considered as the supreme effort of the architecture of to-day. Few temples have witnessed less time pass between the laying of the corner-stone and the last stone of its top. The idea of the architect, M. A. Ricard de Montferrand, a Frenchman, has been followed from beginning to end, without modifications or changes other than he has himself introduced into his plan during the progress of the work. To him has fallen that rare happiness of finishing the monument he has begun, and which from its magnitude would seem forced to absorb the life of more than one artist. An all-powerful will, which nothing, not even material

obstacles, can obstruct, which recoils before no sacrifice, brought about in great part this miraculous celerity. Begun in 1819, under Alexander I., continued under Nicholas, terminated under Alexander II. in 1858, St. Isaac's is a completed temple, finished inside and out in an absolute unity of style, bearing its fixed date and the name of its author. It is not, like so many cathedrals, the slow product of time, the crystallization of centuries, to which each one has in some fashion added its stalactite, and which through the arresting of the sap of faith has been unable to accomplish its original design. The symbolic crane that remains on unfinished temples, like the cathedral of Seville, has never figured on its façade. Uninterrupted labor carried it in less than forty years to the point of perfection in which it is seen to-day.

The aspect of St. Isaac's recalls, mingled in an harmonious synthesis, St. Peter's in Rome, the Pantheon of Agrippa, St. Paul's in London, St. Geneviève and the dome of the Invalides in Paris. In building a church with a cupola M. de Montferrand must necessarily have studied this kind of edifices and profited by the experience of his predecessors, without detriment to his own originality. He chose for his dome the most elegant curve, which at the same time offered the most resistance; he surrounded it with a diadem of pillars and placed it among four towers, thus borrowing a beauty from each style.



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St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg









From the regular simplicity of its plan, which both eye and mind seize at once, one would never suspect that St. Isaac's contains within its apparently homogeneous plan the remains of a former church, which it absorbed and utilized, a church dedicated to the same patron; that was rendered historically venerable by the names of Peter the Great, Catherine II. and Paul I., who all contributed more or less to its splendor, without however, being able to bring it to perfection.

The plans submitted to the Emperor Alexander I. by M. Ricard de Montferrand were adopted and the work commenced; but soon a doubt arose, if it were possible to unite the new portions to the old on foundations firm enough to avoid settling or displacement, as well as to raise solidly to such a great height the cupola, with its circle of pillars. Papers were even written by architects against the projects of M. de Montferrand. The work was well-nigh stopped, though the gigantic monoliths which were to support the front and dome were still being cut in the quarries; but on the accession of Emperor Nicholas the plans, after careful revision, were judged fit for execution. The work was resumed, and its complete success demonstrated the justice of the architect's calculations.

It is not for us to follow in detail the ingenious combinations employed to seat in an indestructible manner, upon a marshy soil, this enormous mass; to bring from afar and raise to such an elevation

columns of a single piece. Although this work would not be devoid of interest, the edifice in its finished form alone engrosses our attention.

The plan of the church of St. Isaac, the Dalmatian—a saint of the Greek liturgy, who bears no relation to the patriarch of the Old Testament—is a cross with equal arms, differing in that respect from the Latin cross, whose foot is longer. The necessity of facing the church towards the east, and of preserving the already consecrated iconostase, joined to that of placing the principal portico opposite the Neva and the statue of Peter the Great, and repeating it exactly on the other side of the building, did not allow the placing of the great door opposite the sanctuary. The two entrances corresponding to the two porticoes are on the sides, as far as the iconostase is concerned, before which is a door in a little portico composed of eight pillars, symmetrically reproduced on the other side. The Greek ritual requires this arrangement, and the art of architecture must accept it in producing a harmonious building, which could not turn one of its smaller sides to the river, although separated from it by a great square. This is the reason that the arms of the golden crosses surmounting the dome and the towers, are not parallel with the façades, but with the iconostase, so that the church has two fronts: one religious, the other architectural; but this inevitable disagreement, owing to its peculiar situation, is masked with skill so consummate that

great attention and long examination are necessary in order to discover it.

If you will stand at the corner of the boulevard of the Admiralty, St. Isaac's will burst upon you in all its magnificence, and from this point you will be able to see the entire edifice. The principal façade is presented in its full beauty, as well as the lateral porticoes; three of the four towers are visible, and the dome is outlined against the sky with its encircling columns, its golden cap, and its bold lantern, dominated by the sign of salvation.

At first sight, the view fulfills every expectation. The rather severe, sombre classic lines of the monument are set off to advantage by the richness and color of its materials, the most beautiful that ever human piety has employed in the construction of a temple: gold, marble, bronze, granite. Without falling into the striped effects of systematically polychrome architecture, St. Isaac's imparts to its splendid materials an harmonious variety of tone, whose reality augments its charm; there is nothing painted, nothing is false, nothing in all this splendor is false to God. Massive granite supports eternal bronze, indestructible marble clothes the walls, and pure gold shines on cross, dome, tower, giving to the whole the Oriental and Byzantine character of the Greek Church.

St. Isaac's rests on a foundation of granite, that to our fancy should have been higher; not that it is out of proportion with the edifice, but, isolated as it

is in the middle of a great square lined with palaces and lofty houses, the monument would have gained in perspective had it been elevated, especially since a long straight line has a tendency to bend in the middle, a truth that Greek art recognized by giving, after leaving the central point, a slight curvature to the entablature of the Parthenon.

A large space, however flat it may really be, always seems slightly concave at its centre. It is this optic effect, of which account has not been taken, which makes St. Isaac's seem too low at the base, in spite of the real harmony of its proportions. This defect could readily be remedied, by giving a gentle slope to the ground from the base of the cathedral to the ends of the square.

Each portico, answering to each arm of the Greek cross of the plan, is reached by three colossal granite steps fit for the legs of a giant, without pity or thought of those of ordinary human beings; but at the three peristyles, which have doors, they are cut into nine steps opposite the entrances. The fourth portico is free of this arrangement; as the iconostase is against it on the inside, there could be no door there, and the granite staircase, worthy of the temples of Karnak, holds its own in peace; only on each side, in the corner near the wall, these steps, for a narrow space, are divided into groups of three, in order that the platform of the portico may be reached.

All this foundation in Finnish granite, red

streaked with grey, is gathered together, cut, polished, with an Egyptian perfection, and will support, for many centuries, without wearying, the temple placed upon it.

The principal porch, which looks towards the Neva, is composed, as are all the others, of a row of eight Corinthian, monolith, columns, with bronze pedestals and capitals. Two clusters, of four similar pillars, placed in the rear, support the caissons of the ceiling and the roof behind the pediment, whose architrave is placed on the first row; sixteen pillars, in all, form a peristyle, full of richness and majesty. The porch of the opposite façade repeats this one in every particular. The two remaining ones, also composed of eight pillars, have but a single row of columns, of similar order and material. They were added to the original plan, during the execution of the work, and they fulfill their purpose very well, which is to ornament the rather bare sides of the edifice.

In the tympana of the frontals are inserted bronze bas-reliefs, the description of which we will reserve till we come to describe the details of the edifice whose principal lines we are now indicating. After having mounted the nine steps cut into the three receding granite layers, whose last one serves as a stylobate to the pillars, one is struck by the enormous size of the shafts, which the elegance of their proportions conceals when seen from a distance. These prodigious monoliths are fully

seven feet in diameter, by fifty-six in height; at close view they resemble towers, surmounted by bronze and crowned by a foliage of brass. There are forty-eight of them in the four porticoes, without counting those in the cupola, which, to be sure, are only thirty feet in height. After the column of Pompey and the column raised to the memory of the emperor Alexander I., they are the largest pieces ever quarried, carved and polished by the hand of man. According to the hour of the day, a ray of blue light runs like a flash of lightning along their surface, which shines like a mirror, and by the purity of its unbroken line proves the unity of the monstrous block.

It is almost impossible to describe the force, power, and eternity these gigantic columns express in their mute language, rising thus in a single piece and bearing on their Atlas-like heads the comparatively light weight of the frontals and statues. They possess the strength of the bones of the earth, and look as if they would only crumble with it.

The one hundred and four monolithic pillars employed in the building of St. Isaac's come from quarries situated in two little islands in the gulf of Finland, between Viborg and Fredrikshamn. Finland is one of the richest countries of the globe in granite. Some prehistoric cosmic cataclysm has doubtless accumulated there this beautiful material, as indestructible as nature. But let us continue our outside sketch. From either side of the pro-

jections formed by the portico there opens into the marble wall an enormous window with carved bronze cornices and supported by two little granite columns with bases and capitals of brass, and a balustrated balcony, supported by consoles; gabled cornices surmounted by attics mark the great divisions of the architecture, while deep shadows linger among their projections. At each corner are fluted Corinthian pilasters, above which stands an angel with folded wings.

Two quadrangular bell-towers, springing from out of the grand line of the building at each corner of the frontal, repeat the *motif* of the monumental window, granite columns, bronze capitals, balustrated balcony, three-pointed frontal, and disclose through the sweeping arches of their windows the bells suspended without scaffolding by means of an especial mechanism. A rounded, gilded cap surmounted by a cross, whose base is buried in a crescent, tops these belfries through which the daylight gleams and whence escape into the sunshine the tuneful melodies of brass.

Of course these two features are produced identically on the other façade. Indeed, from where we are standing we can see the cupola of a third shining; only the fourth is hidden behind the swelling dome.

At each corner of the façade kneeling angels are hanging garlands on candelabra of antique form.

On the pedestals of the frontal are groups and isolated figures of the apostles.

All this crowd of statues imparts a charming animation to the outline of the edifice, breaking most happily its horizontal lines.

Such, roughly speaking, are the chief proportions of what may be called the first story of the monument. Let us climb to the dome, which from its square platform, the roof of the church, rises boldly into the sky.

A round base, divided by three broad mouldings, serves as a base for the tower and as a support to the twenty-four granite monoliths, thirty feet in height, with capitals and pedestals of bronze that surround the dome with a rotunda of pillars, an aërial diadem through which the light plays and gleams. In their interstices are pierced twelve windows, and on their capitals is a circular cornice, surmounted by a balustrade adorned with twenty-four pedestals, on which stand with outstretched wings as many angels holding in their hands the instruments of the Passion and the attributes of the celestial hierarchy.

Above this angelic crown, placed on the front of the cathedral, towers the dome. Twenty-four windows are cut between an equal number of pilasters, while the huge dome rises from the cornices resplendent with gold, and veined with ribs, in relief, in a line with the columns.

An octagonal lantern flanked with little columns,

covered with gold, surmounts the cupola, and is terminated by a colossal cross, carved in open work, victoriously planted over the crescent.

There are in architecture, as in music, rhythms squared with harmonious symmetry, that charm without disturbing the eye and ear; the mind notes with pleasure the return of the *motif* to a spot fixed in advance. St. Isaac's produces this effect; it is developed like a beautiful phrase of religious music, holding fast what its pure classic theme promises, disturbing the eye with not a dissonance. The rose-colored pillars form equal choirs, chanting the same melody on the four sides of the edifice. The Corinthian acanthus displays its green bronze leaves on every capital. Bands of granite stretch over the frieze like the lines of the musical scale, between which the statues correspond with one another by contrasts or resemblances of attitude which recall the required inversions of a fugue; while the great cupola tosses the supreme note into the skies from among its four belfries, which serve as the accompaniment.

Doubtless the *motif* is simple, as are all those taken from Greek or Roman antiquity; but what splendor of execution! What a symphony in marble, granite, bronze and gold!

If perchance this style of architecture inspire a certain regret in those who believe the Byzantine or Gothic style more appropriate to poetry and the needs of the Christian creeds, it

must be remembered that it is eternal and universal, consecrated by the centuries and the admiration of man, quite independent of fashion or time!

The classic austerity of the plan adopted by the architect of St. Isaac's did not permit him to employ for the exterior of this temple, with its severely classic lines, those fantasies in which the caprice of the chisel plays the chief part, those garlands, curlycues, trophies interlaced with children, little genii, attributes frequently very little in tune with the edifice, which but serve to fill up voids. With the exception of the acanthi and the rare ornaments required by the order of architecture, all the decoration of St. Isaac's is confined to the statues, bas-reliefs, groups, and bronze statues, that is all! A magnificent moderation!

Still keeping the point of view that we have chosen, at the corner of the boulevard of the Admiralty, in order to sketch rapidly the general outline of the monument, we will describe the bas-reliefs and statues as they are seen from this spot, meaning to make later the tour of the church.

The bas-reliefs of the northern frontal, which faces the Neva, represents the resurrection of Christ and is by M. Lemaire, the designer of the front of the Madeleine in Paris. The decoration is grand, monumental, decorative, fulfilling its every purpose. The risen Christ bursts from the tomb, the standard in his hand, as He ascends in the center of the triangle, which permits the figure to

attain its full size. On the left of the radiant apparition a seated angel repulses with majestic gesture the Roman soldiers left to guard the tomb. Their attitudes express surprise, fear, and also the desire of opposing the predicted miracle. On the right, two angels, standing, receive with gentleness the holy women who came to weep and scatter perfumes on the tomb of Jesus. The Magdalen is kneeling, overwhelmed with despair, she has not yet seen the miracle. Martha and Mary, carrying cruets of spikenard and cinnamon, are watching the luminous body ascend in glory, to which they had come to pay the honors due the dead, shown them by the finger of an angel. The composition is well grouped, and the bent positions, necessitated by the diminution of space at the outside corners, are assumed naturally. The projection of the figures, according to their places, is calculated to produce deep shadows and decided contours that do not confuse the eye; a happy mingling of high and low relief produces every illusion of perspective that can be reasonably demanded of bas-relief, without destroying its grand architectural lines. Underneath the frontal, in the granite and marble entablature of the frieze, a legend is inscribed in Slavic, which is the liturgical language of the Greek Church. This inscription, written in letters of bronze-gilt, is: "Lord, through thy strength the Tzar will rejoice."

At the three angles of the frontal are placed St.

John the Evangelist and the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul. The Evangelist is seated at the top, with the symbolic eagle; he holds a pen in his right hand and a papyrus in his left. St. Peter and St. Paul are recognized: one by the keys, the other by the great sword upon which he is leaning.

Under the peristyle, over the principal door, a large bronze bas-relief, semicircular above, like the arch which is its frame, represents "Christ on the Cross between two thieves." At the foot the holy women are sobbing and fainting; in a corner the Roman soldiers are casting lots for the garment of the divine sufferer; in another, aroused by his supreme cry, the dead have come to life and are lifting the stones from their tombs. In the two side entrances, of semicircular form, are seen, on the left, "The bearing the Cross;" on the right, "The Burial." The crucifixion is by Vitali, the two other bas-reliefs by Baron Klodt.

The great, monumental, bronze door is ornamented with bas-reliefs, disposed as follows: In the lintel, "The triumphant Entry of Christ into Jerusalem;" on the left leaf, "The Ecce Homo;" on the right one, "The Flagellation;" underneath in the oblong panels, two saints in priestly garments, St. Nicholas and St. Isaac, occupying each one a niche in the shape of a shell; in the lower panels are two kneeling angels, holding in the middle of a medalion a Greek cross covered with historic inscriptions.

Through all its phases, the drama of the Passion

is unfolded under the portico, while the apotheosis shines in full glory on the frontal above. Let us pass now to the eastern portico, whose greatest bas-relief is also by M. Lemaire. It represents a scene in the life of St. Isaac, the Dalmatian, the patron of the cathedral. The emperor Valens leaving Constantinople for a campaign against the Goths, St Isaac, who was living in a little cave near the city, stops him on his way and announces that he will not succeed in his undertaking, since he is at war with God, on account of the support he is giving to the Arians. The emperor, in a rage, orders the saint to be imprisoned and loaded with chains, promising him death should his prophecy prove false, and liberty should it prove true. Now, the emperor Valens was killed on the expedition, and St. Isaac, being set at liberty, received great honors from the emperor Theodosius. Valens is seated on a horse, who, frightened by the appearance of the saint in the middle of the road, has reared. It is by no means easy to make an equestrian statue successfully in round bas-relief, and very few have ever been entirely satisfactory; in bas-relief the difficulty is even greater, but M. Lemaire has happily conquered it. His horse, freed from too minute detail, as is suitable in monumental statuary, carries his rider well, whose figure is thus brought into prominence with excellent effect, dominating without perceptible effort the groups surrounding him.

The saint has just hurled forth his prophecy, and the emperor's orders are being put into execution. The soldiers load with irons the arms extended in supplication and menace. It would be impossible to bring into greater harmony the double action of the subject. Behind Valens a crowd of warriors are unsheathing their swords, seizing their bucklers, putting on their armor, to give the idea of an army setting out on an expedition. Behind St. Isaac is an army, more powerful in the eyes of heaven, of the unhappy poor, of mothers pressing their babes to their breasts. The composition is distinguished by breadth, truth, and action, and the inconvenience imposed by the narrowing of the pediment has not affected injuriously the outside groups.

Three statues are standing on pedestals on the frontal: in the middle St. Luke the Evangelist, his ox lying by his side, is painting the first portrait of the Virgin, the sacred model of all Byzantine images; on either side is St. Simeon holding his saw, and St. James his book.

The Slavic inscription means literally: "We rest on thee, O Lord, and have no doubt about eternity."

As inside the iconostase leans against the wall of this portico, there is no door, and consequently no bas-reliefs under the colonnade, which is only decorated with Corinthian pillars.

The southern frontal was entrusted to M. Vitali. It represents "The Adoration of the Magi," a subject that the great masters have rendered almost

impossible for canvas, that modern statuary has rarely attempted, on account of the multiplicity of figures it requires, but which did not frighten the early Gothic image-makers, in their triptychs so patiently elaborated. It is a composition arranged with the utmost elegance, perhaps a trifle too redundant, but which is enchanting to look upon.

The Holy Virgin, seated amid the folds of her veil, which by an ingenious inspiration of the sculptor opens like the curtains of a tabernacle, presents the little child, who is to redeem the world and of whose divinity she already feels assured, for the adoration of the Magian Kings, bowed or prostrated at his feet in attitudes of Oriental respect. This miraculous birth, preceded by apparitions, these kings come from the confines of Asia, guided by the star, to kneel before a manger, with vases of gold and boxes of perfume, trouble the heart of the holy, ever-virgin Mother; she is almost afraid of this child, who is a God. As for St. Joseph, leaning against a rock, he takes very little part in the scene, accepting with humble faith these bewildering, strange events.

In the suite of the kings Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar are superbly costumed personages, officers, present-bearers, slaves, who richly fill the two ends of the composition. Behind them stand, worshipping from afar, with timid wonder, shepherds clad in sheepskins. In the interval between the groups, the ox thrusts his gentle head with its shin-

ing muzzle, but where was the ass? Was not he pulling a morsel of hay from the manger, and, too, warming with his nose the future Saviour of the world, who had just been born in a stable? Art has no right to be haughtier than Divinity. Jesus did not despise the ass, and it was on a female ass that He made his entrance into Jerusalem.

Three statues, following the invariable harmony of decoration, figure on the pedestals of this façade: at the top, St. Matthew writing to the dictation of an angel; at either end, St. Andrew with his cross over his shoulder, and St. Philip with his book and pastoral cross.

The inscription of the frieze means: "My house shall be called the house of prayer."

If we enter the peristyle, we find the same arrangement as in the northern portico. Over the principal door, in the tympan of the arch, is enthroned a great galvano-plastic bas-relief, like that of the Crucifixion, representing "The Adoration of the Shepherds." It is the most familiar repetition of the preceding scene. The central group remains about the same, although the Virgin turns with a more sympathetic movement towards the shepherds, who are bringing to the new-born babe their rustic offerings, than towards the Magian Kings placing at her feet their rich presents. She is gentle with these humble, simple, poor folk, who give all the best they have. She holds out her child with confidence, opening his clothes to show how strong he

is; and the shepherds, kneeling or bowing down, admire and worship, full of faith in the words of the angel; they give a basket of fruit to the mother and a pair of doves to the child, while above angels hover around the star which has pointed out the stable of Bethlehem.

In the lateral, semicircular doors, are two bas-reliefs: that on the left representing "The Angel Announcing the birth of Christ to the Shepherds," the other "The Murder of the Innocents." Both are the work of M. Laganovski. Upon the lintel of the great bronze door is seen "The Presentation in the Temple;" on the leaves, "The Flight into Egypt," "Jesus in the Midst of the Doctors;" underneath in shell-like niches, a saint and an angel warrior: St. Alexander Nevski and St. Michael; lower down, in the last panels, little angels, bearing crosses.

This portico contains, as its decoration, the entire poem of the Nativity, and the childhood of Christ, as the other contained the entire drama of the Passion.

On the eastern frontal, we have seen St. Isaac persecuted by the emperor Valens; on the western frontal, we are present at his triumph, if such a word is in accordance with the humility of a saint.

The emperor Theodosius the Great returns victorious from a war against the barbarians, and near the Golden Gate St. Isaac, gloriously delivered from prison, presents himself in his poor hermit's

garb, crowned with a chaplet, holding in his left hand the double cross, and raising the right towards the emperor's head, whom he blesses. Theodosius stoops piously, while his arm encircles the empress Flacilla, whom he draws forward as if to include her in the benediction of the saint. This idea is altogether charming and is portrayed with rare grace, and to the majestic heads of the emperor and empress is given an august resemblance. The eagle and insignia of victory lie at the feet of the laurel-crowned Theodosius. On the right warriors, whose attitudes breathe the liveliest devotion, kneel on the ground, lowering their arms before the cross. In the upper part, a man whose scowling visage expresses scorn and rage is going away, leaving St. Isaac in full possession. It is Demophilus, the head of the Arians, who had hoped to influence Theodosius to take sides with the heresies. At the end is seen that woman of Edessa with her child, whose sudden apparition put to flight the troops sent to persecute the Christians. To the left, a maid-of-honor of the empress in rich clothing is supporting a poor, paralyzed woman, symbolizing the charity reigning in this Christian court. A little boy, playing with all the tender grace of childhood, contrasts strangely with the stiff immobility of the sick woman. In the corner of the bas-relief, by an anachronism admissible in idealized statuary, is the architect, draped in antique fashion, presenting a miniature model of the cathedral

which will be built later under the protection of St. Isaac.

This charming composition, whose groups balance and agree in perfect symmetry, is by M. Vitali.

Under this portico, which is simpler than either the northern or southern one, are no bas-reliefs, round or arched in form. It is pierced by a single door opposite the iconostase. This bronze door is divided like those we have already described. The bas-relief of the lintel represents "The Sermon on the Mount." In the upper portion of the two leaves are enshrined "The Resurrection of Lazarus" and "Jesus Curing the Paralytic;" St. Peter and St. Paul occupy the shell-niches; and lower down, angels hold up the sign of redemption. Wheat and the vine, eucharistic symbols, serve as *motif* for the decoration of all the doors.

St. Mark, with his lion, that Venice has chosen for her arms, is writing his gospel at the top of the frontal, while St. Thomas, carrying his square and extending the skeptical finger that he wished to plunge in the wounds of Christ before he would believe the resurrection, and St. Bartholomew, with the instruments of his martyrdom, the block and knife, decorate the extremities. On the tablet of the frieze is the following inscription: "To the King of Kings."

Through their archaic form, the Slavic characters lend themselves well to this sort of inscrip-

tion. They are as ornamental as the Arabian letters. There are still other inscriptions under the peristyles and over the doors, all expressing religious or mystic ideas, but we have translated only those most in view.

The sculptures of all the doors were designed by Vitali, assisted by Salemann and Bouilli, as were also the evangelists and apostles, not one of whom is less than fifteen feet two inches high. The angels kneeling near the candelabra are seventeen feet tall, and the lamp holders twenty-two. These angels, with their great outspread wings, resemble mystic eagles, who have fallen from some lofty spot, on the four corners of the edifice. As we have said before, a swarm of angels is placed on the crown of the dome. The height at which they are put does not allow them to be seen in detail, but the sculptor has given them graceful, exquisite outlines, which are readily seized from below.

Thus on the cornice of the cupola, on the pedestals, attics, and entablatures of the building, without counting the figures in half-relief of the frontal, the bas-reliefs of the roofs and the hemicycles, the figures on the doors, we have fifty-two statues, each three times as large as life, forming for St. Isaac's an eternal people of bronze, in various attitudes, but ever subservient, like an architectural choir, to the cadences of a linear harmony.

Before entering the temple, of which we have

just given a picture as faithful as the insufficiency of words will allow, we must say that it must not be imagined that the cathedral of St. Isaac's, with its noble, pure, severe lines, its sober, rare ornamentation, its austere antique style, presents through this perfect regularity a cold, monotonous, or rather tiresome aspect of the architecture, that for lack of a better term is called classic. The gold of its cupolas, the rich variety of its materials, are sufficient to prevent it from falling into this mishap, and the climate colors it with a thousand unexpected effects of light and shadow, that make it appear entirely Russian. The fairies of the North flutter around the grave monument, and nationalize it without affecting its grandiose and antique appearance.

A Russian winter possesses a poetry all its own; its rigors are compensated by beauties, effects and extremely picturesque aspects. The snow covers with silver the golden cupolas, accentuates with a shining line the entablatures and frontals, touches with white the brass acanthi, places luminous points on the statues, and changes every relation of color under its magic transformations. St. Isaac's, thus seen, assumes an entirely local originality. It is glorious in color, whether it stands in full relief under its snowy curtain from a background of grey clouds, or throws its outline on one of those skies of turquoise and rose which shine in St. Petersburg when the cold is dry and the snow

creaks under the foot like dry powder. Sometimes, after a thaw, a bitter east wind covers the body of the monument, its marbles and stones, with a coating of ice. A network of pearls, finer than drops of dew around the plants, envelops the gigantic columns of the peristyle. The red granite becomes the tenderest pink, its edges like the down on a peach or the bloom of a plum; it is wrapped in some wondrous matter, like the precious stones of which is built the heavenly Jerusalem. The crystallized vapor clothes the edifice with a diamond powder that flashes and darkens when the sunshine falls upon it, till one might fancy it a cathedral of precious stones in the City of God.

Each hour of the day has its mirage. If one looks at St. Isaac's in the morning from the bank of the Neva, it appears all amethyst and topaz, in the midst of an aureole of white and pink splendor. The tender mist floating at its base detaches it from the earth, making it swim in a sea of vapor. In the evening, from the corner of the little Morskaiä, with its windows flashing in the setting sun, it seems illumined and afire inside. The windows flash gaily amid the sombre walls; sometimes during a fog, when the sky is low, the clouds descend to the cupola, covering it like the summit of a mountain. We saw, strange spectacle! the lantern and the upper half of the dome disappear under a bank of fog. The cloud, encircling with its

padded zone the golden hemisphere of the lofty tower, gave to the cathedral a prodigious elevation and the appearance of a Christian Tower of Babel mounting to find, not to defy, in the skies, Him without whom there can be no solid foundation.

Night, that in other climates throws its thick pall over edifices, cannot entirely extinguish St. Isaac's. Its cupola remains visible beneath the black dais of the skies, with all its golden tints, like a vast, half-luminous ball. No darkness, not even that of the worst nights in December, prevails against it. It can always be seen above the city, and if the dwellings of men are effaced in darkness and sleep, the dwelling of God shines and watches.

When the darkness is less dense, and the scintillation of the stars and the half light of the Milky Way throw into relief the outlines of things, the great mass of the cathedral assumes a majestic and mysterious solemnity. The columns, polished as ice, stand out in some unexpected light, while the statues, dimly seen, appear like celestial sentinels to whom the keeping of the sacred edifice has been intrusted. What light there is scattered over the skies is concentrated on the top of the dome with such intensity that the passer-by might easily mistake it for a lighted lamp.

A still more magical effect is sometimes produced: luminous flashes gleam from the extremity

of each of the ribs dividing the dome, encircling it with a diadem of stars, a starry crown placed on the golden tiara of the temple. A more credulous and less scientific century would fancy it a miracle, so dazzling and apparently so inexplicable is this effect. If the moon is full and the sky cloudless, towards midnight St. Isaac's assumes in this opal light, grey, silver, blue, violet tints of unimaginable delicacy: the pink of the stone becomes hydrangea, the draperies of the bronze statues turn white as linen robes, over the golden caps of the bell-towers pass shadows and transparent amber lights, while the snowy network on the cornices glistens ever and anon with shining spangles. A star in the depths of the cold, northern, steel-blue, sky pours his silver rays on the shining golden dome, till the light resembles the electrum of the ancients, made up of gold and silver. From time to time, the fairies, with which the North consoles the long winter nights, display their splendors above the cathedral. The aurora borealis scatters behind the sombre outline of the monument its immense polar fireworks. A bouquet of rockets, irradiations and phosphorescent bands flash out in silver, mother-of-pearl, opal and rose lights, extinguishing the stars and turning into blackness the ever luminous cupola, save for its brilliant point, the golden lamp of the sanctuary, that nothing ever eclipses.

We have essayed to paint St. Isaac's during the

days and nights of winter. The summer is quite as rich in novel, wondrous effects.

During these long days, scarcely interrupted by an hour of diaphanous night, half-twilight, half-dawn, St. Isaac's, inundated with light, looms up in all the majestic perfection of a classic monument. The mirages gone, it is seen in its superb reality; even after the transparent darkness has enwrapped the city, the sun is still shining on its colossal cupola. From the horizon, whence it plunges only to immediately rise, its rays never leave the golden cupola. As in the mountains the highest peak is still illumined by the flames of the setting sun, even after the lower summits and the valleys are long immersed in the mists of evening, so gradually the light quits the crimson spire and regretfully mounts skyward, but it never abandons the dome. Were every star of the firmament extinguished, there would still be one on St. Isaac's.

Now that we have given, to the best of our ability, an idea of the exterior of the cathedral under its varied aspects, let us enter the interior, which is not less magnificent.

Generally one goes into St. Isaac's by the southern door, but let us choose the eastern one, which is opposite the iconostase; it is the point from which the edifice is seen to the greatest advantage.

From the first moment you are seized with a sort of stupor; the gigantic grandeur of the architecture, the profusion of the rarest marbles, the

splendor of the goldwork, the coloring of the mural paintings, the shining of the polished pavement, where each object is reflected, all unite in producing a dazzling impression, especially if you turn your head, as you cannot fail to do, on the side of the iconostase,—the iconostase, a wondrous edifice, a temple within a temple, with its front of gold, malachite and lapis-lazuli, its doors of massive silver, which is however but the veil of the sanctuary. The eye returns there with an irresistible attraction, whether the open doors permit a sight, amid its shining splendor, of the colossal Christ on glass, or, if closed, show only the curtain whose color resembles that of the divine blood.

The interior arrangement of the edifice is so simple that it is comprehended at first glance: three naves terminate at the three doors of the iconostase, cut transversely by the nave, which forms the arms of the cross, ending on the exterior in the projecting porticoes. At the point of intersection is the cupola; at the corners, four domes rise symmetrically, emphasizing the architectural harmony.

On a marble foundation, rise in Corinthian style the pilasters and fluted columns, with bases and capitals in gilt bronze or beaten gold, which adorn the building. This style, applied to walls and massive pillars supporting the arches and the roof, is surmounted by an attic intersected with pilasters, that form panels and frames for paintings. It is on this attic that are placed the archivolts, whose

tympan are adorned with religious subjects. The walls between the columns and pilasters are covered with white marble, with panels and compartments, in green Genoese marble, agate, Sienna marble, variegated jaspers, red Finnish porphyries, in a word all that the richest quarries can supply. Recessed niches, supported by consoles, contain paintings that form a charming interruption to the smooth surfaces. Roses and various figures in gilt bronze stand out boldly from the marble. The ninety-six pillars are from the quarries of Tvidi, which furnish an exquisite marble, veined with grey and pink. The white marbles were taken from the quarries of Seravezza, that Michael Angelo preferred to those of Carrara, which is certainly the highest possible praise, for who has ever known so much about marble as the architect of St. Peter's or the sculptor of the tomb of the Medici?

With this slight idea of the interior of the church given in a few words, let us turn to the cupola, which opens above the head of the visitor, its gulf suspended in mid-air, with an indestructible solidity, in which iron, bronze, brick, marble, stone, combine their mighty forces, in accordance with the highest mathematical laws. The dome, from the pavement to the top of the lanterns, is 296 feet 8 inches, or in Russian measure 42 sagues 2 archines. The length of the edifice is 288 feet 8 inches (or 39 s. 2 a.); its width 149 feet 8 inches

(21 s. 3 a.). We do not believe in an excessive use of figures, but here they are necessary for the perception of the real size of the edifice and an aid towards the relative appreciation of the proportion of the details.

In the top of the lantern, at an immense height, a colossal Holy Spirit spreads its white wings, surrounded by rays. Lower down is a half cupola, with gold palm-leaves on a field of azure. Then comes the great spherical vault of the dome, bordered on its upper side by a cornice whose frieze is decorated with garlands and heads of angels, resting at its base on the entablature of twelve fluted Corinthian pilasters, which separate equally the twelve windows. A false balustrade, serving as a point of transition between architecture and painting, crowns this entablature, while amid the light of a great sky is placed a great composition representing "The Triumph of the Virgin." This painting, as well as all those in the dome, had been intrusted to M. Bruloff, known by his picture of "The Last Day of Pompeii" which figured at one of the Paris Expositions. M. Bruloff was worthy of the choice, but an illness terminating in death did not allow him to execute this important work. He had only finished the cartoons, and though his ideas and meanings have been religiously followed, one cannot help missing in these paintings, wonderfully suited to their decorative purpose, the eye, the hand and the genius of the master. He would

doubtless have given to them all they lack: touch, color, fire, all that comes into the execution of the most carefully planned work, that even equal talent is unable to realize when attempting to realize the thoughts of another.

In order to make our description as clear as possible, let us face the iconostase: then we will have before us the central group, which is the heart of this vast composition. The Holy Virgin, surrounded with glory, is seated on a throne of gold; with lowered eyes, and hands crossed modestly over her breast, she appears, even in heaven, to submit to rather than to accept this triumph; but she is the humble servant of the Lord, *ancilla Domini*, so she resigns herself to the apotheosis.

On either side of the throne stand St. John the Baptist, the forerunner, and St. John, the disciple beloved of the Lord, recognizable by his eagle. They both deserve this place of honor: one announced Christ; the other followed Him to the Mount of Olives, was present at His Passion, and to him the dying God confided His mother.

Under the throne flutter little angels with lilies, the symbol of purity. Great angels, with outspread wings, placed at intervals in poses of daring perspective, hold up the bank of clouds supporting the groups, that we are about to describe, on the left of the Virgin, relative to the spectator making the tour of the cupola, until we return on the right, at the end of the cycle of the composition.

One of these angels is armed with a long sword, the attribute of St. Paul, whom in fact we see kneeling above him on a cloud near St. Peter, his head turned towards the Virgin; cherubim open the book of the Gospels, and play with the golden keys of Paradise.

On a cloud floating above the balustrade and forming an aërial pedestal to the groups, is, next to St. Paul and St. Peter, an old man with a white beard, in the habit of a Byzantine monk; it is St. Isaac, the Dalmatian, the patron of the cathedral. Near him stands St. Alexander Nevski, in a cuirass and purple mantle; angels hold the draperies behind him, and on a golden disc the image of Christ indicates the services rendered to religion by the warrior saint.

The next group is composed of three Holy Women, kneeling: Anna, mother of the Virgin; Elizabeth, mother of the forerunner; and Catherine, sumptuously dressed: an ermine mantle, a brocaded dress, and a crown on her head, not that she belongs to a royal or princely family, but because she unites the triple crown of virginity, martyrdom and science, so that her original name of Dorothy was changed to Catherine, whose Syriac root, *cethar*, means a crown. Thus all this luxury is allegorical. An angel under the cloud is holding a fragment of a wheel with teeth bent backward, the instrument of St. Catherine's martyrdom.

Separated by a slight interval from the group

we have just described, a third cloud is supporting St. Alexis, the man of God, clothed in monkish habit, and the Emperor Constantine, in a cuirass of gold draped with purple; an angel close by is holding the axe and bundle of rods; still another angel behind has the insignia of command, an antique sword in its sheath. The last group, as one returns to the throne of the Virgin, represents St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra and patron saint of Russia, dressed in a dalmatic and green stole covered with gold crosses, in adoration before the Mother of God; he is surrounded by angels holding banners and sacred books.

Of course one recognizes in these figures the holy patrons of Russia and its imperial family. The mystic idea of this immense composition, which is 228 feet around, is the triumph of the Church, symbolized by the Virgin. The disposition of this painting calls to mind that of the cupola of St. Geneviève in Paris, by Baron Gros. Nor do we at all mean to criticise M. Bruloff; such resemblances are inevitable in religious subjects, whose principal lines are determined in advance. Conforming to the intentions of the architect, better than many artists charged with paintings have done, M. Bruloff, or those who have executed his designs, have confined themselves to a clear, firm tone, avoiding excessive lights and shadows which are always injurious to mural paintings, since they interfere with the architecture, and give to

objects lines impossible to those of the edifice. These paintings, together with all the others in the cathedral, even when these are on gold, make no effort to reproduce the hieratic, stiff and monotonous attitudes of Byzantine art.

Monsieur de Montferrand very judiciously considered that, since the church of which he was the architect borrowed its forms from the pure Greek or Roman style, the artists charged with the duty of painting it should seek inspiration from the great Italian school, the most skillful and learned in the decoration of religious edifices in this style. The painters of St. Isaac's, then, are by no means archaic, contrary to the habits of the Russian Church, which voluntarily conforms to the models fixed in the early times of the Greek church and preserved according to tradition by the religious painters of Mt. Athos.

Twelve great gilt angels, taking the part of caryatides, support consoles on which stand the bases of the pilasters which form the interior row of the dome and separate the windows. They are twenty-one feet high, and were made by the galvanoplastic process in four pieces, whose welding together is invisible. They could in this manner be made so light that, in spite of their dimensions, they would not be too heavy for the cupola. This crown of gilt angels, poised amid a flood of light, and shining with brilliant reflections, produces an extremely rich effect. The figures are disposed

according to a certain agreed architectural line, but with a variety of attitude and sufficient action to avoid the monotony that would result from a too rigorous uniformity. Various attributes, such as books, palms, crowns, scales, crosses, trumpets, afford the motive for numerous poses as well as for designating the celestial functions of these brilliant statues. The spaces between the angels are filled by seated apostles and prophets, each accompanied by his own recognized symbol. All these figures, nobly draped and in good style, stand out from a light background whose general style is like that of fresco.

The four Evangelists, of colossal size, occupy the pendentives of the dome. The artist has endeavored to give these figures haughty, strong attitudes, like those in the Sistine Chapel. They have been obliged to conform to the unusual form of the pendentives within which they are enclosed, and the inconvenience thus imposed frequently results in inspiration. These Evangelists are indeed very striking.

By the winged lion, we recognize St. Mark, who in one hand holds his gospel, and with the other raised seems to be in the act of preaching or blessing. A circle of gold shines around his head, blue draperies envelop his knees. Angels hold a cross over his head.

St. John, in green tunic and red mantle, is writing on a long roll of papyrus, unrolled by angels.

Near by the mysterious eagle is beating his wings, while from his eyes flash the lightnings of Revelation.

Leaning on his ox, St. Luke is looking at his portrait of the Virgin, which angels are holding. A labarum is floating over his shining head. An orange-red drapery is gathered in great folds around him.

The angel companion of St. Matthew is standing by him. The saint, in a violet tunic and yellow mantle, holds a book in his hand. Over the sombre sky, that serves as a background for all the figures, cherubim are floating about, and a single star is shining.

On the points of the pendentives are four paintings representing scenes in the Passion of Christ. In one, Judas at the head of the soldiers, carrying torches, gives his master the traitor kiss, which points him out from among his disciples. In another the standing Christ is being scourged by two tormentors with knotted whips. The third shows us Jesus, to whom the Jews preferred Barabbas, taken from prison to be delivered to the executioner, while Pontius Pilate, seated in judgment, is washing his hands from the blood that must always remain on them. The fourth picture represents what the Italians call the *spasimo*, the fainting of the victim under the cross on the way to Calvary. The Virgin, Holy Women and St. John escort the divine prisoner in attitudes of anguish.

The attic of the transept, forming a Greek cross, contains on the right, facing the iconostase, "The Sermon on the Mount" by Pietro Bassino. On a raised place shaded by trees, Jesus, seated, is preaching to his disciples; the people are crowding to hear Him; even the lame have stumped there on their crutches; the sick have been brought on their pallets, eager for the divine word; the blind have groped thither; women are listening with all their hearts, while in a corner some Pharisees are cavilling and disputing; the arrangement is fine, and the well-scattered groups leave to the central figure of Christ its full importance.

The subjects of the two lateral paintings are the parables of "The Sower" and "The Good Samaritan." In one, Jesus is walking in the fields with his disciples; he shows them the Sower, casting his grain, and the birds of the air, fluttering around his head. In the other, the Good Samaritan, having descended from his horse, is pouring oil into the wounds of the young man abandoned by the roadside, to whose prayers the Pharisee has turned a deaf ear. The first of these paintings is by Nikitine; the second, by Sazonoff. In a richly framed panel in the vaulting, cherubim are holding a book against the sky.

Opposite "the Sermon on the Mount" in the attic, at the other end of the nave, is a vast painting by Pluchart, representing "The Multiplication of the Loaves." Jesus occupies the centre,

while His disciples are distributing to the famished multitude the miraculous bread which is constantly increased, a symbol of the Eucharistic bread, which shall nourish the generations of the earth.

The pictures on the two side walls represent "The Return of the Prodigal" and "The Workman of the Eleventh Hour" whom the rest desired to expel, but whom the Master received. The first by Sazonoff, the second by Nikitine. Cherubim, holding up a pix, are painted in the panel of the vaulting. The central nave, from the transept to the door, is decorated by Bruni. In the back of the tympan, Jehovah, enthroned on a cloud, surrounded by archangels, angels, and cherubim, in a circle, symbolizing eternity, is content with the creation and blesses it. At the nod of His head, the infinite has been shaken to its inmost depths, and from nothing all has been created.

On the attic, the terrestrial paradise shines green with trees, flowers and animals. The first human pair wanders peacefully among species that sin and death, its result, must later render fierce. Not yet does the lion rend the gazelle, the tiger throw himself on the horse; the elephant is all unaware of the strength of his defense, and all respect the resemblance to God on the foreheads of the inmates of Eden.

In the vaulting above, angels contemplate in

amazement the sun and the moon, the lamps of the firmament, which have just been lighted.

The subject of the panel of the attic is "The Deluge." The waters, pouring in floods from the abyss and the sky, have covered the youthful world, so soon perverted, which has already caused God to regret its creation. Some mountain tops, that the inundation will soon cover, alone emerge from the shoreless ocean. The last remnant of the human race, condemned to perish, are hanging there in despair, their muscles standing out in a convulsive effort to reach the narrow space. In the distance, under the pouring rain, floats Noah's ark, carrying within its hollow sides all that will survive of the ancient creation.

On the other wall, "The Sacrifice of Noah" is the pendant to the Deluge. The blue smoke of the accepted sacrifice mounts through the serene air to the sky, from the primitive altar, made of a piece of rock. The patriarch, standing, dominates, with his great antediluvian stature, his sons and daughters-in-law kneeling around him, each pair of whom is destined to be the source of a great human family.

In the background on a curtain of clouds, which are melting away, a rainbow throws its dainty curve, the sign that promises, by its appearance at the end of the storms, that the waters shall never again cover the earth, which shall be free from all cosmic catastrophe until the day of judgment.

Further on "The Vision of Ezekiel" covers a great space in the vaulting. Standing on a piece of rock, under a sky aflame with crimson light, in the middle of the valley of Jehoshaphat, whose dead population springs into life and trembles like the wheat in the furrow, the prophet is watching the terrible spectacle unrolling before him; at the ringing call of the angel trumpeters, the ghosts rise in their shrouds; skeletons drag themselves along with fleshless fingers and readjust their scattered bones; dead bodies show outside of the sepulchres, with dread and remorse, their decomposed faces, to which life is returning. They who one time were the peoples of the world seem as if asking grace, and regretting the night of the tomb, with the exception of a few just persons, filled with hope in the divine bounty, to whom the crushing gesture of the prophet brings no alarm.

Great force of imagination and majestic vigor of style are displayed in this painting, so considerable in dimensions: the study of the Sistine frescoes is very perceptible. The coloring is sombre, strong, and of that historic tone, a noble clothing of the thought that we moderns abandon too often for the glitter of effect and small verity of detail, so false in monumental or decorative painting.

At the end of this same nave, in the recess where is the iconostase, Bruni has painted "The Last Judgment," of which the vision of Ezekiel is but the prophecy. A colossal Christ, two or even

three times as large as the surrounding figures, is standing before his throne, whose steps are clouds. We highly approve of this Byzantine manner of giving a visible predominance to the divine, principal personage. It strikes both untutored and cultivated imaginations, the first by its material, the second by its ideal side. The centuries have passed, time exists no longer, all is eternal,—reward and punishment. Overturned by the breath of angels, the old skeleton, his sickle broken, falls into powder. Death in his turn dies. On the right hand of Christ, press with upward movement crowds of happy souls, with pure, slender figures, long, chaste draperies, faces radiant with beauty, love and ecstacy, who greet the angels as brothers. On the left, whirling round in the violence of their fall, pushed by haughty, stern angels, with sharp wings and flaming swords, is that accursed group recognized by their hideous forms as all the wicked inclinations that drag men down to destruction. Envy, whose hair whips his thin temples like serpents; Avarice, sordid, angular, bent; Impiety, casting heavenwards its look of impotent revenge: all these guilty ones, weighted down by their sins, roll into the abyss, where the crisp hands of demons, whose bodies are invisible, are waiting to tear them in eternal agony. These knotty, clawlike hands, like the iron combs used by the executioners, are poetic in the extreme, producing the most awful terror. It is worthy of

Michael Angelo or Dante. We sought vainly for these hands, which we had seen on the cartoon, in the painting; the projection of the cornice, the curve of the arch, dark in the corner, doubtless prevented them from being seen. It may be seen, by these rapid descriptions, necessarily subordinate to the ensemble of the church, how important are the works executed by Brunì in St. Isaac's. It is to be desired that the work of this remarkable artist should be engraved or at least photographed, since his paintings have not the notoriety they deserve. These compositions with numerous figures, several times larger than life, cover immense surfaces, such as very few modern painters have had the opportunity of executing. This artist has also done several of the sanctuary paintings, of which we will speak later.

At either end of the transverse nave, of which Brunì's "Last Judgment" occupies the centre, are paintings, that the lack of light prevents from being seen with satisfaction: in the attic, "The Resurrection of Lazarus" by Scheboniëf; higher up in the tympan, "Mary at the feet of Jesus" by the same master; on the side wall, "Jesus Casting Out Devils," "The Wedding at Cana," "Christ Saving St. Peter on the Waters," by the same. On the opposite side, the great picture of the attic represents "Jesus Raising the Son of the Widow of Nain," in the tympan, "Jesus blessing little children," also by Scheboniëf. The side wall

contains several miracles: "Christ Curing the Lame Man," "The Repentant Sinner," "Curing the Blind Man," by Alexéieff. Another transverse nave—for the church, divided into three naves in its length, has five in its breadth—encloses paintings by various artists. "Joseph Receiving His Brethren in Egypt," by Markoff, is an enormous painting occupying the entire attic. "The Dying Jacob," surrounded by his sons, whom he is blessing, is in the tympan, and is by Steuben. Pluchart has painted on the wall, in three panels: "The Sacrifice of Aaron," "The Arrival of Joshua in the Promised Land," "The Finding of the Fleece by Gideon." "The Passage of the Red Sea," by Alexéieff, is unfolded on the attic wall, opposite "Joseph Receiving His Brethren." It is a tumultuous, confused composition, too violent in movement for a mural painting. It is rather difficult to disentangle the subject from among the multitude of figures, especially since the background is unfavorable. Above "The Destroying Angel striking the Firstborn of Egypt," is also by Alexéieff.

"Moses Saved from the Waters," "The Burning Bush," "Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh," by Pluchart, decorate one of the walls; the other is ornamented with panels representing "Miriam Singing the Praises of God," "Jehovah Giving the Tables of the Law to Moses" and "Moses Writing His Last Wishes," by Zavaloff.

At each end of the lateral naves, on the right

and left of the door, is a cupola. In the vault of the first, Riss has represented the apotheosis of St. Fevronius, surrounded by angels carrying palms and instruments of torture, swords, torches, fagots for the funeral pyre; in the pendentives, on a gold background in imitation of mosaic, are the prophets Hosea, Joel, Haggai, Zechariah; in the recesses of the arches are historical and religious subjects, among others Minine and Pojarsky, names that stir every patriotic Russian heart. We will beg permission to devote a few lines to this painting, since it is not enough, especially for those readers who are not Russian, to merely announce the subject, as when it is a question of a *motif* drawn from Sacred History, known to all Christians, of all communions.

The kniaz Pojarsky and the moujik Minine resolved to save their country, menaced with Polish invasion. They made ready to depart, both at the head of their troops. The nobility and the people unite in mutual devotion to these two heroes, who, desiring to place their enterprise under the protection of God, caused to be carried before them by the clergy the holy image of Our Lady of Kazan, from whom fell in sign of acquiescence a ray of celestial light. As the procession passed, men, women, children, the aged, all ranks and ages, prostrated themselves in the snow. In the background may be seen the balustrades and crenelated walls of the Kremlin with its towers.

The other tympan shows us Dmitri-Donskoï kneeling at the threshold of a convent, to receive the benediction of St. Sergius of Radonej, who comes out, accompanied by monks, before setting forth to conquer, near Koulikovo, the Tartars under Mimai.

The subject of the third painting is Ivan III. showing to St. Peter, the Metropolitan, the plans of the cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow. The saint approves and calls down the protection of heaven on this pious founder.

A council of the apostles, on whom is descending the Holy Spirit, fills the fourth vaulting. In the cupola are the following paintings, all by the hand of Riss: on the ceiling, "The Apotheosis of St. Isaac, the Dalmatian;" on the pendentives, Jonas, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah. The recesses formed by the arches contain subjects relative to the introduction of Christianity into Russia: "Proposition Made to Vladimir to Embrace the Christian Faith," "Baptism of Vladimir," "Baptism of the Inhabitants of Kief," "Publication of the Adoption of Christianity by Vladimir." The order ornamenting these cupolas is Ionic.

These paintings, though composed with skill, are rather too historical. The artist, eager for effect, has not borne sufficiently in mind the conditions of mural painting. Scenes whose frames are arches and architectural divisions ought to be tranquil, rather than dramatic, and much like

polychrome bas-reliefs. When he is working in a church or palace, the painter ought to be before all else a decorator, and sacrifice his individual preferences to the general effect of the monument. His work should be fastened there immovably. The great Italian masters, whose frescoes are so different from their pictures, have understood this particular side of art better than the masters of all other nations. This criticism is not meant for Riss alone; it is merited in varying degree by most of the artists charged with painting in St. Isaac's, who have not always made the sacrifices of execution necessary to mural painting. The walls against which the pilasters and columns are placed are decorated with subjects executed by different artists, in the recesses of the niches, with cartouches containing inscriptions.

In these niches Pieter Neeffs has painted "The Ascension," "Jesus Christ Sending His Image to Abgarus," "The Lifting of the Cross," "The Birth of the Virgin," "The Descent of the Holy Spirit." Neeffs' paintings are full of color and sentiment, and may be ranked among the most satisfactory in the church.

By Steuben: "St. Joachim and St. Anna," "The Birth of St. John the Baptist," "The Entry into Jerusalem," "The Crucifixion," "Jesus Christ in the Tomb," "The Resurrection," "The Assumption of the Virgin."

By Mussini: "The Annunciation," "The Birth

of Jesus," "The Circumcision," "Candlemas," "The Baptism," "The Transfiguration."

All the paintings of St. Isaac's are in oil; fresco is not suitable to damp climates, and its so vaunted solidity does not withstand the passage of two or three centuries, as is unhappily demonstrated by the state of deterioration, more or less advanced, of most of the *chefs-d'œuvre* for which the masters had hoped eternal freshness and preservation. Encaustic painting alone remains; but its management is difficult, and it is rarely used. Then, too, the wax reflects the places worked upon, and in addition too short a time has passed since attempts of this kind have been made for anything but theories on the subject of its duration. It is then with reason that M. de Montferrand chose oil for the paintings in St. Isaac's.

Let us now turn to the iconostase, this wall of holy images, encased in gold, which unveils the secrets of the sanctuary. Those who have seen the gigantic screens of the Spanish churches can form some idea of the development that the Greek religion has attained in this portion of its churches.

The architect has raised his iconostase as far as the attic, so that it is in harmony with the order of the edifice and the colossal proportions of the monument whose entire back, from one wall to the other, it occupies. It is the front of a temple, within a temple.

Three steps of red porphyry form the founda-

tion. A balustrade of white marble, with a gold railing, incrustated with precious marbles, marks the line of demarcation between the priest and the faithful. The purest marble from the quarries of Italy serves as a foundation for the wall of the iconostase. This foundation, which would be rich anywhere else, is well-nigh hidden under its superb ornaments.

Eight columns of malachite, of Corinthian order, fluted, with pedestals and capitals of gilt bronze, with two pilasters bound together, compose the façade and support the attic. The color of the malachite with its metallic lustre, its queer green copper-colored tints, so charming to the eye, its perfect hard stone polish, is wonderfully beautiful and magnificent. It is difficult to convince oneself at first of the reality of such luxury, for malachite is only used for tables, vases, boxes, bracelets and jewelry, and these columns, as well as the pilasters, are forty-two feet high. Sawn in the block by circular saws invented for the purpose, these malachite slabs are fitted over a copper drum so perfectly that you can scarcely believe it is merely a veneer, while within the copper a solid iron cylinder bears the weight of the superposed attic.

The iconostase is pierced with three doors, of which the central one gives access to the sanctuary; the two others to the chapels of St. Catherine and St. Alexander Nevski. The order is as follows:

a pilaster in the corner, and a column, then the door of a chapel; next three columns, the principal door, three more columns, chapel door, a column and a pilaster.

These columns and pilasters divide the wall into spaces like frames, which are filled with pictures on gold, imitating mosaic, modelled from real mosaics, which will replace them, gradually, as they are finished. From the foundation to the cornice are two rows of frames, separated by a second cornice that is broken by the columns, which is supported at the middle door on two little columns of lapis-lazuli, and at the chapel doors on pilasters of the purest white marble.

Above is an attic, intersected with pilasters, incrustated with porphyry, jasper, agate, malachite and other native precious materials, decorated with ornaments in gold-bronze, of a richness and splendor that is not surpassed by any church screens of Italy or Spain. The straight pilasters of the columns mark out compartments equally filled by paintings on gold.

A fourth story, in relation to the frontal, passes the line of the attic, and is terminated by a great group of gilded angels in adoration at the foot of the cross, by Vitali, while a kneeling angel is praying on either side. In the middle of the panel a painting by Givago represents Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane accepting the bitter cup on that

terrible evening in which his best loved disciples had fallen asleep.

Immediately beneath are two large angels in full relief, holding the sacred vases, their silver wings moving, their garments blown by the air, accompanied by little angels on smaller projections that are lost in the wall, who hold up a panel representing the Last Supper, half in painting, half in bas-relief. The people are painted; the background of gold portrays with the skillful management of *chiaro-oscuro* the room in which the paschal feast is held. This painting is also by Givago.

Under the archway of the door, decorated by a semicircular inscription in Slavie characters, rises a group, disposed in the following manner: in the middle, Christ, the eternal pontiff according to the order of Melchizedek, sits enthroned on a richly decorated seat. In one hand he holds the ball of the world, figured by a globe of lapis-lazuli, and with the other makes the sacred gesture. An aureole surrounds his head; his garments are of gold. Angels crowd behind his throne; at his feet crouch the winged lion and the symbolic ox. On his right kneels the Holy Virgin; on his left, St. John, the precursor.

This group, which is cut into the cornice, offers a remarkable peculiarity. The people are in full relief, with the exception of the heads and hands, which are painted on silver openwork, cut according to the outline. This composition of the Byzan-

tine icon with sculpture, produces an effect of extraordinary force, and a close scrutiny is necessary to discover that the faces and nude portions are not in relief. The gold reliefs were designed by Klodt; the *chiaro-oscuro* by Neeff's.

To this central subject are attached, by an insensible transition, patriarchs, apostles, kings, saints, martyrs, the just, a pious crowd forming the court and army of Christ, whose groups fill the voids in the archivolt. These figures are painted entirely on gold backgrounds.

The arches of the lateral doors have as ornament, on their tops, the tables of the law and a chalice radiant with gold and marble surrounded with little angels.

When the holy door, which occupies the middle of this immense façade, of gold, silver, lapis-lazuli, malachite, jasper, porphyry, agate, the immense casket of all the riches that human magnificence undeterred by any expense can bring together, closes mysteriously its leaves of chiselled, beaten silver-gilt, thirty-five feet high by fourteen wide, there are seen from amid the dazzling carved frames, the most wonderful that have ever enveloped the work of a brush, paintings representing the four Evangelists, the angel Gabriel, and the Virgin Mary.

But when, amid the pomp of the service, the sacred door throws wide its leaves, a colossal Christ, forming the great window in the depths of the

sanctuary, appears in gold and purple, raising His right hand to bless, in an attitude in which modern science has allied itself with the majestic Byzantine tradition. Nothing could be more beautiful or splendid than this image of the Saviour, illuminated with dazzling rays as in the depths of a sky, opened through the gateway of the iconostase. The "dim, religious light" that reigns in the church at certain hours augments still more the splendor and transparency of this magnificent window, painted in Munich.

Such are the principal divisions. Let us now describe the figures they enclose, commencing at the first row on the right, as the visitor faces the iconostase.

First, then, Jesus Christ on his Byzantine throne, the globe in his hand, in the act of bestowing his benediction; next comes St. Isaac, the Dalmatian, unrolling the plan of the cathedral. Both these figures are executed in mosaics, on backgrounds composed of little cubes of crystal lined with gold, producing the same warm, rich effect that is so much admired in the St. Sophia in Constantinople, and St. Mark's in Venice. A painting in precious stones should always have a gold field.

St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra and the patron saint of Russia, in a brocaded dalmatic, his hand raised and holding a book, occupies the third panel.

St. Peter, separated from St. Nicholas by the









door of the lateral chapel, terminates the row. All these figures are the work of Neeff's.

Leaving the group of the Saviour in His glory surrounded by His elect, the first figure on the second file is St. Michael fighting the dragon; next in the same panel come St. Anna and St. Elizabeth, who are united by their miraculous maternities. The last compartment encloses Constantine the Great, and the empress Helena, clothed in purple and gold. This row is by Theodore Bruloff.

In the attic, following the same order, are seen, separated by marble pillars, incrustated with other stones, the prophet Isaiah, whose extended finger seems to pierce the shadows of the future; Jeremiah with the roll, upon which are inscribed his Lamentations; David, leaning on his harp; Noah, designated by the rainbow; and finally, Adam, the father of men, painted by Givago.

On the left of the sacred door, in harmony with the Christ placed on the other side, the Holy Virgin is presented with the child on her knees. This picture is also executed in mosaic, as well as the neighboring panel, representing St. Alexander Nevski in armor, with the buckler and standard of the faith, on which is the face of Christ. Next to St. Alexander Nevski is St. Catherine, a crown on her head, a palm in her hand, while near her is the wheel, the instrument of her martyrdom; in the corner beyond the arcade of the chapel St.

Paul is leaning on his sword. They all are the work of Neeffs.

The second row contains St. Nicholas, in a coarse frock; St. Magdalen and the Tzarina Alexandra, in the same panel; the first designated by the vase of perfume, the other by her crown, sword and palm; St. Vladimir and St. Olga, to be recognized by their imperial vestments: all by Theodore Bruloff.

On the third row follow in the order in which we name them: Daniel with a lion crouching near him; the prophet Elias; King Solomon, carrying the model of the temple; Melchizedek, king of Salem, presenting the bread of the sacrifice; and finally, the patriarch Abraham, by Givago, as well as all the figures we have just named.

This rampart of images, separated by pillars of malachite, compartments of precious marble, richly decorated cornices, produces amid the mysterious dim light reigning in this part of the cathedral a magnificent, imposing effect. Sometimes a sudden ray of light turns the golden backgrounds into a blaze of glory; or a single plaque is lighted up, causing the saint to stand in bold relief as if instinct with life; or a stray sunbeam glides along the flutings of the malachite, a spark lingers on a gilded capital, a garland stands out in the light. The painted heads of a golden group assume a singular animation, resembling those miraculous images of the legends, that look, speak and weep.

The scintillations of the tapers throw their flickering light on some detail hitherto unnoticed and starts it into new loveliness. According to the hour, the veil of the sanctuary is obscured or illumined, with warm shadows or flashing splendors.

On the left of the iconostase, as one faces it, is the chapel, placed under the protection of St. Catherine. It is entered by an archway, surmounted by angels holding the pix, which opens into the great iconostase itself, close to the sacred door.

The iconostase of St. Catherine's chapel can be seen from the extreme end of the church, framed within the side nave. Its façade is of the purest white marble, incrustated with malachite and adorned with ornaments of gilt bronze, while on its frontal is a gilded group, by Pimenef, representing Our Lord Jesus Christ rising from the tomb, to the terror of the guards. In the tympan, cherubim display on a piece of linen that portrait of the Saviour so miraculously imprinted there, which was never painted by human hand. "The Placing of the Divine Body in the Tomb" occupies the frieze. In the archivolt, above the door, "The Last Supper" is portrayed. The heads of the four Evangelists, the angel Gabriel, and Mary beautify the leaves of the door.

Christ, presenting the open Gospel, occupies the first panel; on the right in the upper panel is St.

Catherine with her ordinary attributes of crown, palm and wheel.

The Holy Virgin of Vladimir is a dependent to the figure of Christ, on the left panel; above her, St. Anastasia, fastened to a funeral pyre, is suffering martyrdom. On the right door, done in open-work, is the Emperor Constantine, crowned and wearing a robe of gold brocade covered with eagles. In the upper compartment is St. Metrophanus de Voroneje with a cross. On the other door is the empress Helena, holding a cross, to signify that she discovered the remains of the true cross; underneath is St. Sergius of Radonej.

Within the interior of the iconostase are the paintings of "Jesus Christ Blessing a Likeness of the Saviour on Linen," by Pluchart, and "A Holy Virgin," by Chamchine.

Opposite the window rises the lateral wall of the great iconostase, decorated with sculpture and paintings. Square Ionian pilasters of the purest marble support the consoles which sustain the attic. Over the door angels are adoring a radiant chalice raised on a pedestal adorned with triple cherubim heads.

The archangel Michael, copied freely by Theodore Bruloff from the St. Michael of the Louvre, has crushed the devil under foot. On either side are St. Alexis of Moscow, and St. Peter, the Metropolitan, clothed in rich sacerdotal vestments. The second row, formed of panels framed in rich

mouldings, contains St. Boris and St. Glebe, St. Barnabas, St. John and St. Timothy, St. Theodosius and St. Anthony. All these figures are painted on gold backgrounds with a slight touch of the archaic.

The ceiling of the cupola represents "The Assumption of the Virgin;" the pendentives contain St. John of Damascus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Clement, and St. Ignatius.

Within the arches, Bassine, to whom were intrusted the mural paintings of this chapel, has portrayed the martyrdom of St. Catherine, of St. Dmitri, and of St. George, and the renouncing of the world by St. Barbara.

On the other side of the great iconostase, as a dependency to the chapel of St. Catherine, is the chapel of St. Alexander Nevski, whose iconostase is arranged in exactly the same manner.

Jesus on Mt. Tabor, a gilt group by Pimenef, crowns the frontal. Underneath cherubim display a drapery on which is written a legend in Slavonic characters. In the frieze is painted a bearing of the cross. Then comes, in the archivolte, the Last Supper, and on the door the four Evangelists, and the Annunciation embodied by Gabriel and Mary.

To the right of the door Christ is calling little children to Him. The upper compartment is occupied by St. Alexander Nevski in armor. In the recess on the same line is seen the Tzarevich

Dmitri, a young child, that angels are carrying heavenward. Underneath, St. Vladimir, crowned, is dressed in a brocaded robe and carrying a Greek cross.

On the left is the Holy Virgin with the child Jesus, and above is St. Spiridion; on the carved side are St. Michael of Tver in armor, and St. Olga in imperial garments, pressing a cross to her breast. The figures of this iconostase were painted by Maikof. In the interior of the iconostase is "A Christ Blessing" by Pluchart, and a "Nativity" by Chamchine.

The ceiling of the recess has as its subject Jehovah in His glory, surrounded by a circle of angels and seraphim. In the pendentives are painted St. Nicodemus, St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, St. James the Less, surnamed the brother of Christ, and Joseph of Arimathea.

The tympan of the arches are filled with scenes taken from the life of St. Alexander Nevski, to whom the chapel is dedicated. In one, he is praying for his country; in another, he has gained a victory against the Swedes, and his white horse is curvetting in the midst of the melee; in the third, stretched on his death-bed, he is making an edifying Christian end, amid burning candles and praying priests; in the fourth, his remains are being piously transported to their final resting place on a rich catafalque carried on a boat. These paint-

ings, like the mural paintings of St. Catherine's Chapel, are due to Pietro Bassine.

The wall of the principal iconostase, which encloses on that side the chapel of St. Alexander Nevski, offers the same divisions as the other, and its ornamentation is identical, except that above the door the Tables of the Law, carved in marble, replace the chalice.

On the door Theodore Bruloff has painted the angel Gabriel. On the impost is Moses, between the prophets Samuel and Elias. The two neighboring panels contain St. Polycarp and St. Taraise, St. Methodius and St. Cyril, apostles to the Slavs. The panels of the door represent St. Philip and St. Jonas, the Metropolitan of Moscow. All these personages, on gold backgrounds and in modernized Byzantine style, are by Dorner.

There remains only to describe the Holy of Holies, hidden from the eyes of the faithful by the veil of gold, malachite, lapis-lazuli, and agate of the iconostase. This mysterious sacred enclosure, where are celebrated the secret rites of the Greek Church, is rarely entered. It is a sort of room or choir, lighted by the window on which shines the gigantic Christ that is seen from the extremities of the church when the sanctuary-doors are opened. Two of the walls are formed by the inner side of the partitions ornamented with paintings, whose description we have just finished. Low down on the reverse side of the door,

St. Lawrence is holding his gridiron, the instrument of his martyrdom, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nazianze are painted in the side compartments. The attic, divided into three frames, shows in the first St. Gregory Dialogos and St. Ephraim of Syria; in the second, over the door, St. Gregory of Nysse, St. Samson, and St. Eusebius; in the third, St. Cosmos and St. Damian. Dorner, the Bavarian artist, painted the figures in the second row, and Moldavsky those of the lower one.

The north wall exactly repeats this arrangement. St. Etien is represented on the door. On either side are St. John Chrysostom and St. Athanasius of Alexander, by Moldavsky. The upper row, painted by Dorner, contains Alexis, the man of God, and St. John Climax, St. Tychon of Amathonte, St. Pantaleimon and St. Methodius, St. Antony, and St. Theodore of Kief.

Behind the iconostase is seen an image of Christ, received on the handkerchief offered by St. Veronica, by Neeffs, and above a Christ blessing the Holy Offerings, by Chamchine.

On the ceiling, painted by Bruni, are "The Holy Spirit by Angels," and on the three faces of the attic "The Washing of the Feet," "Jesus Giving the Keys to St. Peter," "Jesus Appearing to the Apostles," compositions full of spirit and the purest religious feeling.

The altar, of pure white marble, is of the noblest simplicity. A model of the church of St. Isaac's

in silver gilt is placed on the top of the tabernacle. This model presents certain details that are not found in the actual church. As, for example, the buttresses that support the bell-towers are adorned with large groups in relief like those of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and the attic was surmounted by a suite of bas-reliefs whose effect would have been most happy.

We have passed over certain medallions or compartments in the interior of the church, framed in the midst of vaultings and soffits badly lighted, difficult to see, whose value is purely decorative, such as the angels carrying the sacred attributes, by Chamchine; Elias, Enoch, Faith, Hope, Charity, Wisdom, Love, by Maikof. We only mention them in order that our work may be complete.

Now that we have described, with all the care of which we are capable, the exterior and interior of St. Isaac's, let us sketch with a freer pencil some of the principal effects of light and shade in this immense edifice. There is not sufficient light in St. Isaac's, or at least it is unequally divided. The cupola throws a flood of light on the center of the cathedral, and the four large windows light sufficiently the cupolas, situated at the four corners of the building. But the other portions remain dark, or at least are light only during certain parts of the day, or owing to fugitive rays of light. It is a wished-for defect, for nothing could be more easy than to open windows in

this monument standing alone on every side. M. de Montferrand desired this mysterious half-light, favorable to religious impression and earnest prayer. But he probably lost sight of the fact that this dimness, which suits Roman, Byzantine, or Gothic architecture so well, is less happy in an edifice in the classic style, made for sunshine, all covered with precious marbles, gold ornaments and mural paintings, that ought to be seen, and that people wish to see, after their devotions have been accomplished. A number of these paintings have been executed in great part by lamp-light, which of itself should have condemned the places they occupy. It would have been easy, in our opinion, to conciliate everything, and have light and shadow in turn, with windows that could be darkened by shutters, hangings, or shades. Religion would have lost nothing, and art would have gained thereby. If St. Petersburg has long summer days, there are also long winter nights that encroach on the day, during which a very dim light filters through the sky.

Still it must be acknowledged wonderful effects are resultant from these alternations of light and shadow. When one looks through the long, dark naves at the St. Alexander Nevski and St. Catherine chapels, whose iconostases in white marble, adorned with gold bronze, incrustated with malachite and agate, covered with paintings on gold, receive the sunshine from a great side window,

one is dazzled with the radiance of the fronts, framed in by their sombre vaultings which serve as background. The great window representing the Christ shines resplendent amid the half-light with a wonderful intensity of coloring. Nor is the uncertain light injurious to the isolated figures whose full outline is clearly defined on a gold background. The brilliancy of the metal always brings the figure into sufficient relief, but such is by no means always the case with compositions made up of large groups on natural backgrounds. Many charming details escape the eye and even the lorgnettes. Byzantine churches, or, to speak more exactly, the Greco-Russian style, in which reigns this religious mystery that M. de Montfer-rand desired to obtain for St. Isaac's, do not include pictures in the real sense of the word; the walls are covered with decorative paintings, whose personages are traced, without any attempt at effect or illusion, on a plain field of gold or color, in conventional postures, with invariable attributes, expressed by simple traits and flat tints, which dress the edifice, as it were, in a rich tapestry, whose general tone pleases the eye. We know very well that M. de Montferrand recommended to the artists charged with the painting of St. Isaac's to proceed in large masses with free touches and a decorative manner: a counsel more easily given than followed, in view of the architecture adopted. Each artist has done his best, according to his

nature and the resources of his genius, bowing, in spite of himself, to the modern character of the church, except with the iconostases, where the figures, either isolated or placed one after the other in the gold panels, stand out imperiously, assuming those clearly cut contours suitable to painting when it is destined to ornament an edifice.

The compositions of M. Bruni, which we have noted as they presented themselves in the description of the church, the subject or the order, are admirable from a deep feeling of style and truly historic treatment, formed by a profound, careful study of the Italian masters. We are insistent on this quality, for it is so often lost sight of, Ingres and his school being its last interpreters. A certain way of telling the story, a too curious search into effect or detail, the fear that too much severity will prevent its success, deprive modern works of the stamp of magisterial gravity possessed in past centuries by works of even the second order. Bruni continued these grand traditions, he sought inspiration from the frescoes of the Sistine and the Vatican, adding, besides his personal feeling, to that inspiration, something of the profound, thoughtful manner peculiar to the German school.

One feels that if Bruni studied Michael Angelo and Raphael, he has also thrown a sagacious glance at Overbeck, Cornelius, and Kaulbach, whose works have exerted more influence upon the art of to-day than is generally supposed. He ponders, arranges,

balances and reasons over his compositions, without that haste to begin painting that is so perceptible in many of the paintings of to-day, otherwise full of excellence. With Bruni, execution is the means of expressing thought, not its end; he understands that when the subject has been portrayed on the cartoon, with style, nobility and grandeur, the most important part of his task has been accomplished. He even sometimes neglects color too much, admitting in too great a proportion those sombre, neutral, abstract tints, in his eagerness to allow to the idea the prominent position. We do not like in historical painting what is called illusion; it is not at all necessary that too coarse a reality or too material a life should trouble those serene pages where the image of objects, and not the objects themselves, should alone be reproduced; still it is well to be a little careful, especially in thinking of the future, in the use of those dark, flat localisms engendered by the study of the old frescoes. The paintings executed by Bruni in St. Isaac's are the most monumental that the church possesses, being characterized by dignity and individuality. Although he is wonderfully successful with figures demanding energy, and is sufficiently conversant with anatomy to attempt the portrayal of muscular force demanded by certain subjects, Bruni is endowed in addition, as with an especial gift, with the grace and angelic sweetness of Overbeck.

There are in his figures of angels, cherubim and happy souls an elegance, a distinction, if one may be allowed this word,—usually employed in more worldly fashion,—and a poetry of exquisite charm.

Pieter Neeffs has undertaken the work confided to him more in the fashion of an artist working for a museum than the decorator of a monument, but we do not owe him a grudge on that account. His pictures, placed much nearer the eye, shoulder-high, so to speak, in those niches of the walls and pilasters which serve as frames and which give mural painting the appearance of a picture, do not demand the sacrifices of effect and perspective required by the attics, the vaultings, and the cupolas. This artist has a warm, brilliant coloring, a skillful, precise execution that recalls Peter von Hess, whose works we saw in Munich.

“Jesus Sending His Portrait to Abgarus” and “The Empress Helena Finding the True Cross” are remarkable pictures, which could be taken from their places without any loss of value. All the other paintings of Neeffs, in the niches of the pilasters, bear the stamp of the master and reveal an artist gifted with a rare appreciation of color and *chiaro-oscuro*. The solitary figures he has executed on the iconostases, the heads and the portions of the nude painted by him in the great gold group surmounting the sacred door, possess depth of tone and wonderful boldness of execution.

The paintings of Bruni, for composition and

style, and those of Neeffs, for color and execution, seemed to us the most satisfactory of their kind. Pietro Bassine, in his numerous works, has evinced richness, facility, and that decorative manner that distinguished the painters of the eighteenth century, to whom in our day has been restored the esteem that David and his school had denied them. It may be said now in praising an artist, that he resembles Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Maratta, or Tiepolo. Bassine covers great spaces with ease. He has a perfect understanding of what is called in art "the machine." His compositions make a picture, a rarer talent than one might suppose, and one that is fast disappearing. Every one is acquainted with the conservative, pure and correct talent of Mussini: he has painted in the niches of the pilasters several compositions that but confirm the reputation he has already acquired. Markoff, Zavialoff, Pluchart, Sazonoff, Theodore Bruloff, Nikitine, Scheboniëf, all merit praise for the manner in which they have acquitted themselves of the tasks confided to them.

If we do not pass a definite judgment of the cupola by Charles Bruloff, it is because illness and death, as we said when we described his composition executed by Bassine, prevented him from painting it himself, as well as from impressing upon it the *cachet* of his own personality, one of the most forceful and remarkable ever produced by Russian national art.

In Bruloff was the stuff for a great painter, and, amid numerous faults, something that redeemed them all,—genius. His head, which he painted himself several times, with the pallor and increasing emaciation of illness, sparkles with it. Under his uncared-for blonde hair, behind that forehead ever increasingly white, illumined by eyes from which life was fast fleeing, there are a thousand evidences of artistic, poetic fancy.

Now let us sum up in a few lines this long study on the magnificent cathedral of St. Isaac's. It is beyond doubt, whether one admires the style or not, the most remarkable piece of architecture that has been executed in this century. It does honor to M. de Montferrand, who led it to its conclusion in so short a time (forty years), and who can sleep in his tomb, repeating to himself with more truth than many a haughty poet: "Exegi monumentum, ære perennius" (I have erected a monument more enduring than brass), a satisfaction rarely accorded to architects, whose plans are generally so long in being realized, and who are present only in spirit at the inauguration of the temples they have begun.

In spite of the rapidity with which St. Isaac's was built, there was time enough between the placing of the first and the last stone to bring about many changes. At the time in which the plans of the cathedral were received the classic taste reigned without division or rival. Only the Greek or Ro-

man style was considered as the type of perfection. All that the genius of man had imagined to realize the ideal of a new religion was regarded as null and void. Roman, Byzantine, Gothic architecture was considered in bad taste, contrary to rule, barbarous, in a word. It was only accorded a certain historic value, but no one ever dreamed of taking it as a model. At best the Renaissance was to be pardoned on account of its love for antiquity, with which it mingled many delicious inventions and charming caprices, blamed by severe critics. At last the Romantic school arrived whose passionate studies of the Middle Ages, and the national origins of art, brought about a comprehension, by means of its enthusiastic commentaries, of the beauties of those basilicas, of those cathedrals, of those chapels, so long despised as the patient but little enlightened work of a credulous age.

It was discovered there existed an art, very complete, very reasonable, with a perfect consciousness of its own powers, obedient to certain fixed rules, possessing a complicated and mysterious symbolism, in those edifices, as wonderful for their size as for the finish of their every detail, that had heretofore been regarded as the haphazard work of ignorant stone-cutters and masons. A reaction was thus brought about, that soon became as unjust as reactions generally are. All merit was denied to modern buildings taken from

classic models, and probably more than one Russian was filled with regret that in their sumptuous temple they had not rather imitated St. Sophia of Constantinople than the Pantheon of Rome. Such an opinion can readily be supported; perhaps it may even prevail to-day. There would certainly be nothing unreasonable about it, if the building of St. Isaac's were about to be commenced now, but when the plans were all made no architect could have acted in any other way than did M. de Montferrand; any attempt directed in any other direction must have seemed foolish to him.

For our part, quite outside of any predilection for any particular system, the classic style seems to us the most suitable for St. Isaac's, central shrine of the Greek faith. The employment of these forms, consecrated apart from fashion or time, which can never, for they are eternal, become superannuated or barbarous, no matter how long the edifice remains, was the wisest for a monument of this kind, upon which they impress a stamp of universality. Known by all civilized peoples, these forms can excite only admiration, without surprise or eriticism, and if another style might have appeared more local, more picturesque, more uncommon, it might also have given rise to the inconvenience of various judgments, and perhaps even itself been bizarre, an impression directly contrary to that desired to be produced. De Montferrand did not seek the curious, but the beauti-

ful, and certainly St. Isaac's is the most beautiful church of modern times. Its architecture suits St. Petersburg admirably, the youngest and newest of the capitals.

Those who regret that St. Isaac's is not in the Byzantine style make us think of those people who are always regretting that St. Peter's in Rome is not built in Gothic style. These great temples, the centers of religion, should affect nothing in particular that is temporary or local, so that all the centuries and all the faithful, from whatever place they may come, can kneel there surrounded by richness, beauty and splendor.



MOSCOW.



## XVI.

### MOSCOW.

IN spite of finding life in St. Petersburg so charming, we were penetrated with the desire of beholding the true Russian capital, the great Muscovite city, an undertaking that the railroad would render easy of accomplishment.

We were by this time sufficiently acclimated to have no dread of a journey in thirteen degrees below zero. The opportunity of going to Moscow in agreeable company presenting itself, it was seized with eagerness and forthwith we buckled on our great winter costume: sable pelisse, castor bonnet, furred boots reaching to the knee, and sallied forth. One sleigh took our luggage, another received our person carefully tucked in with furs, and there we were in the huge railroad station awaiting the hour of departure, indicated for high noon. But Russian railroads do not pique themselves upon their undeviating punctuality. If some great personage is to go by the train, the locomotive moderates its ardor for some minutes, even a quarter of an hour if necessary, to give him time to arrive. The travelers are accompanied by their families and friends; and when the last

bell rings, the separation is not accomplished without hand-shakings, embraces, and tender words, often interrupted with tears. Sometimes even the entire group take tickets, get into the car and go to the next station, meaning to return by the next train. We love this custom and think it charming; one wishes to enjoy a little longer the presence of the loved one, and to defer as long as possible the sad moment of separation.

A painter would have observed there on the faces of these moujiks, very plain otherwise, expressions of a pathetic simplicity. Mothers, wives, whose sons or husbands were going away probably for a long time, recall, by their naïve and deep grief, the holy women, with their red eyes, and mouths contracted with sorrow, that the artists of the Middle Ages placed on the way of the cross. We have seen in different lands many places of embarkment for steamers, many railroad stations, but never have we seen in any place adieus so tender or heart-broken as in Russia.

The preparation of a railroad train in a country where the thermometer descends frequently during the winter to thirty degrees below zero is very different from the method employed in more temperate climes. The hot water in the zinc foot-warmers used in France would very soon be frozen under the feet of the travelers, who would have under them only a block of ice. The air passing through the joints of the doors and windows would

occasion colds, pneumonia, and rheumatism. Several wagons joined together and communicating by doors, that open and shut at the will of the travelers, form a sort of apartment, preceded by an ante-chamber, with water-closet and dressing-room where the small luggage is placed. This ante-chamber leads out to a platform surrounded by a balustrade, that is reached by a stairs infinitely more convenient than the foot-boards used in France.

Stoves, filled with wood, warm the compartment, maintaining a temperature of sixty or sixty-five degrees. At the cracks of the windows rolls of felt keep out the cold air and concentrate the heat within. So, you see, a journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow in the month of January, in a temperature whose annunciation alone would give a Parisian a chill and make his teeth chatter, has nothing in the least glacial about it. One would unquestionably suffer more in accomplishing, at the same time, a trip from Burgos to Valladolid.

Around the first of the carriages runs a broad divan, for the use of those who wish to sleep or do not object to crossing their legs in Oriental fashion. We preferred the divan to the elastic *fauteuils* furnished with little braided pillows in the second room, and forthwith established ourselves comfortably in a corner. Thus settled, we felt as if we were in a house on wheels, without any of the accustomed discomforts of a railway carriage.

We could get up, walk about, pass from one car to another with the perfect freedom of a passenger on a steamboat, of which the unhappy wretch fastened up in a diligence, post-chaise or railway-carriage as they are manufactured in France is absolutely deprived.

Our place being taken and marked by a travelling-bag, and the train not being ready to start, we were walking about the station, when the unusual shape of the boiler of the locomotive attracted our attention. Its top is an enormous funnel, like those Venetian chimneys with swelled-out hoods, that rise so picturesquely above the pink walls in Canaletto's pictures.

Russian locomotives are not heated with coal as in the western part of Europe, but with wood. Sticks of birch or pine are piled up regularly on the tender, and are renewed at the stations that have wood-yards. This explains the saying of the old peasants, that at the rate they are going now it will soon be necessary in Holy Russia to tear the logs out of the "isbas" (cabins) to feed the stoves; but long before the forests are cut down, those at least not too far away from the railroad, the engineers will have discovered beds of coal. This virgin soil must hide inexhaustible wealth. At last we are off. We leave on our right, on the ancient post-road, the triumphal arch of Moscow, with its grandiose outline silhouetted against the sky; the houses fly past, gradually growing more

scattered, their wooden fences and walls painted in the old Russian fashion, their green roofs frozen under the snow; for in proportion as we leave the centers the buildings, which in the handsome quarters affect the style of Berlin, London, or Paris, resume the national character. St. Petersburg is fading away in the distance, but the golden cupola of St. Isaac's, the spire of the Admiralty, the pyramids of the church of the Horse Guards, the domes of starry blue, the tulip-shaped bell-towers of brass, still sparkle against the horizon, producing the effect of a Byzantine crown placed on a cushion of silver brocade. The houses of men have disappeared into the earth; those of God flash upwards towards heaven.

While we are looking out the window, the panes, owing to the contrast between the cold outside and the warmth within, are being fast covered with light, silver-colored foliage, which spreading out into graceful boughs and broad leaves, soon forms a fairy forest, so dense that all view of the landscape is intercepted. Certainly, nothing can be more beautiful than boughs, arabesques and filigrees of frost, so daintily traced by the finger of winter. It is part of the poetry of the North, among which imagination can run riot in a thousand fancies. Still, when we have gazed at them upwards of an hour, we grow weary of this white embroidered veil, that prevents us equally from seeing or being seen.

One's curiosity is piqued at the thought that beyond those dimmed glasses is passing an entirely unknown world, which our eyes may never again have the chance of seeing. In France we would have composedly lowered the window, but in Russia such an imprudence would have been fatal: the cold, which is ever on the watch for prey, would have stretched into the carriage its great polar paw and seized us in its embrace.

In the open air one may contend with him, as with a fierce foe, though after all loyal and generous in his strength; but never let him penetrate within your walls; open neither door nor window to his approach; for then he engages in mortal combat with the warmth, pierces it with his icy arrows, and if you too receive one in the side you will find it difficult indeed to be cured.

Still something must be done, for it would have been indeed sad to have been carried from St. Petersburg to Moscow in a box in which there was but a square of milky white, that allowed no sight of the outside world. We are not, thank Heaven, of the temperament of that Englishman who had himself taken from London to Constantinople with a bandage over his eyes, that was only taken off at the entrance to the Golden Horn, in order that this splendid panorama, without rival in the world, might burst upon him all at once, free from gradual transitions. So then, let us draw our fur bonnet down to our eyebrows, turn up the collar of

our pelisse and fasten it tightly, put on our high boots, thrust our hands into the gloves that leave but the thumb free,—a true Samoiede costume,—and let us direct our steps bravely to the platform in front of the ante-chamber of the carriage. A veteran in a military cloak, decorated with a row of medals, was keeping guard over these steps, and apparently was not at all inconvenienced by the temperature. A little tip of a silver-rouble, that he did not ask for but did not refuse, induced him to obligingly turn towards another point of the horizon, while we lighted an excellent cigar from Eliseïef's, taken from one of those boxes with glass sides, that allow one to see the merchandise without breaking the band of the government stamp.

We were soon forced to throw away this pure Havana *de la Vuelta de Abajo*, for if it burned at one end it froze at the other.

A lump of ice soldered it to our lips, so that a piece of skin came off on the tobacco every time we took it away from our lips. To smoke in the open, with the temperature thirty degrees below zero, is something quite impossible, and it is not very difficult to conform to the ukase that prohibits pipe or cigar out of doors. The scene unrolled before our eyes presented, however, enough interest to atone for this small privation.

As far as the eye could reach, the snow covered the ground with its cold drapery, leaving the vague form of objects lying under its folds, much

as a shroud covers a body. There were neither roads, paths, rivers nor demarcations of any sort. Nothing but scarcely perceptible reliefs and depressions in the universal whiteness. The beds of the frozen rivers could only be distinguished by a sort of indentation that traced its windings across the snow, and was frequently covered by it. In the distance, clusters of rusty birches, half-buried, raised their bare heads. From some log-cabins covered with icicles, rose curls of smoke, making a spot on the pallor of this sad, grey day. The railroad was designated by lines of brushwood planted in several rows, meant to catch the white, icy dust that the north wind from the pole whirls with maddening force across its straight bed.

It is difficult to describe the strange, sad grandeur of that immense white landscape, offering the appearance presented by the full moon when seen through the telescope. One felt as if in a dead planet paralyzed with eternal cold. The imagination refuses to believe that this prodigious mass could ever melt, evaporate or return to the sea in the swollen torrents of the streams, and that a day of spring would transform these colorless plains into green, flowering meadows. The low, cloudy sky, of a monotonous grey, that the white of the earth made seem yellow, added to the melancholy of the landscape. A profound silence, only interrupted by the rumbling of the train over the rails, reigned in this boundless solitude, for

the snow deadened every sound with its carpet of ermine. Not a soul was to be seen across the desert waste, not a trace of animal or man. The man was cowering among the fire-logs of his isba, the animal in the depths of his den. Only on approaching the stations, there issued from snow-drifts, sleighs and kibitkas, the little, dishevelled horses galloping across fields without thought of the effaced roads, coming from some unseen village to meet travelers. In our car were a number of young noblemen going hunting, and dressed for the occasion in beautiful new touloupes of a light salmon color, stitched with graceful arabesques. The touloupe is a sort of blouse of sheepskin, whose wool is worn inside, as are all the furs in really cold countries. A button fastens it on the shoulder, a leather belt with metal buckle around the waist. Add to this an Astrakhan bonnet, white felt boots, a hunting knife stuck in the belt, and you will have a costume of entirely Asiatic elegance; although it is the costume of the peasant, the "barines" (nobles) do not hesitate to wear it upon occasion, for nothing could be more convenient or better adapted to the climate. Then, too, the difference between this clean, supple touloupe, as soft as a glove, and the spotted, greasy, soiled touloupe of the moujik, is too vast to incur the risk of any possible confusion. Those birch and pine forests, standing out in brown lines against the distant horizon, are teeming with

wolves, bears, and even it is said, elk, the wild, fierce game of the North, the hunting of which is often accompanied with danger, and demands agile Nimrods, robust and courageous.

A troika, drawn by three superb horses, was awaiting our young noblemen at one of the stations, and we watched them disappear into the interior at a pace the locomotive might have envied, over a road lost amid the snow, but indicated at intervals by means of posts as landmarks.

At the rate at which they went, they were soon lost to sight. They were to meet at a château, whose name we have forgotten, some companions, and bade fair to be much more fortunate than those foolish men in La Fontaine's fables who sold the bear's skin before they had killed him. They were counting upon killing the bear, and keeping his skin, to make of it one of those foot-rugs with a scarlet border and stuffed head, over which newly-arrived travelers never fail to stumble in the drawing-rooms of St. Petersburg. From their quietly assured manner, we have not the slightest doubt of their skill as hunters.

We will not mention individually the stations along the route; it would not impart very valuable information to our readers were we to announce that the train stopped at such and such a place, whose name would awake no idea or souvenir; all the more so, that the cities or towns, of little importance for the most part, are often quite dis-









tant from the railroad, and can only be announced by the green bulbs and copper cupolas of their churches. For the railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow follows a straight line inflexibly, never making a detour under any pretext. It does not honor, with a single curve or bend, Tver, the most considerable city it meets in its course, from which the steamers of the Volga start; it passes by haughtily at some distance, and Tver must be reached either by sleigh or drosky, according to the season.

The stations are built on a uniform plan and are magnificent. Their architecture mingles harmoniously the red tones of brick with the white tones of stone. But having seen one, you have seen all; so we will describe the one where we stopped for dinner. This station enjoys the distinction of being built not alongside of the road, but exactly in the middle, like the church of Marylebone in the Strand. The railroad encircles it on each side, and here it is that the trains for Moscow and for St. Petersburg meet and pass. The two trains discharge the travelers to right and to left, who later meet at the same table in the station restaurant. The Moscow train takes the people from Archangel, Tobolsk, Kiakhta, Irkoutsk, the lands bordering the river Amur, the shores of the Caspian Sea, from Kazan, Tiflis, Caucasus, Crimea, from the depths of all the European and Asiatic Russias, who as they pass shake hands

with their Western acquaintances, brought on the train from St. Petersburg. It is a cosmopolitan love-feast, where are heard more languages than in the tower of Babel. Rows of great double-sashed windows on either side light the room where the table is spread, and where reigns a mild hothouse temperature, that allows the palms and tulip-trees and other tropical plants to expand their great silky leaves. This luxury of rare plants, which one does not expect to find in so harsh a climate, is almost universal in Russia. It imparts an air of luxury to the interiors, rests the eyes after the dazzling of the snow, and maintains the tradition of verdure. The table was splendidly served, covered with silver and glass, and loaded down with flowers of every sort and kind. The long *quilles* of the Rhine wine towered above the bottles of Bordeaux with their slender, metal-topped corks and the bottles of champagne with their silver paper tops; all the fine brands were there, Château d'Yquem, the Haut Barsac, Château Lafitte, Genau-Larose, Veuve Cliquot, Roederer, Moët, Sternberg-Cabinet, as well as all the celebrated brands of English beers: a complete assortment of famous beverages, marked with gold labels, brilliant colors, charming pictures or authentic coats of arms. It is in Russia that the best French wines are drunk: the purest juice of our vintages, the best of our vats, passes down these Northern throats, who do not trouble themselves about the

price of what they are swallowing. With the exception of *chtchi* soup, the cuisine, it is scarcely necessary to say, was French, and we have kept in fragrant memory a certain dish of dressed fowl that would not have been disavowed by Robert, that great official to the palate, of whom Carême once said: "It is sublime, this dressed fowl!" The servants, in black with white cravats and gloves, circulated around the tables waiting attentively, though noiselessly.

Our appetite satisfied, while the travelers were emptying their glasses of every shape, we looked at the two salons at each end of the station, reserved for illustrious personages, the elegant little shops, where were exposed sachets, shoes, slippers from Toulouza, of morocco embroidered with gold and silver, Circassian carpets, embroidered in silk on scarlet grounds, belts woven with gold threads, cases containing dishes of platinum inlaid with gold in exquisite taste, models of the cracked bell of the Kremlin, Russian wooden crosses, carved with a patience worthy of the Chinese, and covered with an endless number of historic, microscopic personages, a thousand amusing trifles, made to tempt the tourist and lighten his purse of roubles, if he has not, like us, the strength to resist the pride of the eye and to content himself with simply looking. Still it is very hard, as one's thoughts turn towards absent dear ones, not to encumber oneself with pretty trifles, which prove on one's

return that one has not forgotten them, so in the end one usually succumbs to temptation. The meal had united in the same room the inmates of the various carriages, and we could not help observing that when they are traveling, as when they are in town, women seemed less sensible of the cold than men. Most of them wore nothing thicker than a satin cloak lined with fur; they did not bury their heads in high turned-up collars, nor load themselves down with a mass of garments. Doubtless coquetry counts for something in the case: what is the use of having a fine figure, or a small foot, if one looks like a bundle? A lovely Siberian attracted universal attention by an elegance that the journey had in no whit ruffled. She might have just left her carriage to enter the opera. Two Gypsies dressed with bizarre richness struck us by their unusual type, which but the more accentuated their half-civilized toilettes. They laughed at the gallant speeches of the young noblemen, and showed their rather fierce looking white teeth, with the brown gums, characteristic of the Gypsy race.

As we left the warmth, in spite of the pelisse we had resumed, the cold, as night approached, grew keener. In fact, the thermometer had gone down several degrees. The snow had assumed a more intense whiteness, and cracked under our feet like piled up glass. Diamond-like spangles floated about the air and fell upon the ground. It would

have been imprudent to have resumed our post at the balustrade of the car, for we might easily have compromised the future of our nose. Then, too, the landscape continued exactly the same. White plain succeeded to white plain, for in Rusals, filled the stove with wood, and the temperature changes.

The veteran, with the breast covered with medals filled the stove with wood, and the temperature of the car, which had grown chilly, soon mounted up. A gentle warmth reigned around, and had it not been for the movement of the springs, impressed by the traction of the locomotive, we could have fancied ourselves in our own chamber. The wagons of inferior class, although arranged with less comfort and luxury, are heated in the same manner. In Russia, heat is dispensed to everybody. Lords and peasants are equal in presence of the thermometer; the palace and the cabin mark the same degree. It is a question of life and death.

Stretched out on the divan, our head supported by our traveling-bag, covered with our pelisse, we were not long in falling asleep, in perfect content, rocked by the regular movement of the engine. When we awoke it was one o'clock in the morning, and the fancy seized us to go look for a little while at the nocturnal aspect of Northern nature.

The winter night is long and dark in these latitudes, but no darkness can utterly extinguish the

whiteness of the snow. Under the most sombre sky its livid pallor stretches under the arch of the firmament like a winding-sheet, and strange lights and blue phosphorescent gleams come from it. It betrays the lost objects by the touch it hangs to their outlines, drawing them, as if with a white pencil, on the black background of the darkness. This wan landscape, whose lines change axis and disappear swiftly behind the train, assumes the strangest aspect. One moment, the moon piercing the thick bank of clouds throws its chilly ray over the icy plain, changing its particles into burnished silver, while the rest turns blue in the shadows, thus proving the accuracy of Goethe's observation in his theory of colors on the shades of the snow. It is difficult to imagine anything more melancholy than this immense white horizon, that seems to reflect the moon and to return to it the light it has received. It gathers around the railway-carriage, always the same, like the sea, and yet the locomotive is flying at full speed, tossing from its boiler flashing, crimson sparks; but to the discouraged eye it seemed as if one could never emerge from this white circle. The cold, augmented by the displacement of air, was intense, penetrating to our bones in spite of the downy thickness of our furs; our breath froze on our mustache, enclosing our mouth in a gag of ice; our eyelids closed and we felt, although we were standing, sleep overwhelm us; it was full

time to go back. When there is no wind, the bitterest cold is supportable, but the least breath sharpens its arrows and whets the blade of its steel axe. Generally in those low temperatures where the mercury is frozen, there is not a breath of air, and one might cross Siberia, a candle in one's hand, and the flame would not tremble; but with the smallest current of air, one freezes, no matter how tightly embedded in the thickest furs of any inhabitant of the pole.

It was indeed a delicious sensation to us to reach the luxurious atmosphere of our compartment, and to nestle down into our corner, where we slept till dawn, with that peculiar sentiment of pleasure that man experiences when sheltered from the rigor of the season, written on the window-panes in letters of ice. The grey morning, as Shakespeare has it, for Homer's rosy-fingered Aurora would assuredly have been frozen in such a latitude, commenced, enveloped in its pelisse, to walk on the snow in its white felt boots. We were approaching Moscow, and already could discern from the platform of the car its denticulated crown amid the first timid light of day.

Only a few years ago, to the eyes of a Parisian, Moscow loomed vaguely from the depths of a distant background, like a sort of aurora borealis filling the entire sky, with the light of fires kindled by Rostoptchin outlining its Byzantine diadem, bristling with towers and strange spires amid

a flaming of lightnings and smoke. It was a city fabulously splendid, chimerically distant, a tiara of precious stones placed in a waste of snow, of which the returned soldiers of 1812 talked with a sort of stupor, for to them the city had been transformed into a volcano. In fact, before the invention of steamboats and railroads it was by no means a light undertaking to go to Moscow. It was much more difficult than to go to Corinth, although that is a journey all the world may not undertake, if one may believe the proverb.

When a child, Moscow engrossed our imagination and we used to stand in ecstasy on the Quay Voltaire, in front of a shop of engravings, where were exposed great panoramic views of Moscow in aquatint, colored after the process of Demarne, or Debucourt, which were much in the fashion at that time. Those onion-shaped bell-towers, those cupolas surmounted with crosses with chains, those painted houses, those people with long beards and queer-shaped hats, those women wearing povoiniks on their heads and short skirts with waists under their arms, seemed to belong to the world of the moon, and the idea of ever making a journey there never entered our minds; then, too, since Moscow was burned up, what interest could a heap of cinders offer? It required a long time to convince us that the city had been rebuilt, and that all the old monuments had not been destroyed in the flames. Well, in less than a half hour we

would be able to judge if the aquatints of the Quay Voltaire had been inexact or faithful! At the terminus there was a great crowd of *isvochtehiks*, offering their sleighs to travelers and others seeking to decide which they would take. We chose two, one for ourselves and the other for our luggage. As is the habit with the Russian coachmen, who never wait for the place where they are to go to be told them, our drivers put their horses into a gallop, and dashed off in the direction most pleasing to their fancy, a piece of amusement they never fail to give themselves.

The snow had fallen in greater abundance in Moscow than in St. Petersburg, and the runners of the sleighs were above the level of the sidewalks, nearly two feet. On the thick, dazzling layer of snow which had been shovelled up, the runners of our light equipages flew like the wind, while the horses' feet tossed the icy particles against the leather snow-protector. The street down which we were flying was lined with public *étuves*, vapor-baths, for the bath of water is little used in Russia. If the people look dirty, this untidiness is only on the outside, and has to do with winter garments, costly to renew; but there is not in Paris any little exquisite, plastered with cold-cream, rice powder or virgin milk, whose body is cleaner than a moujik coming out of the *étuve*. The poorest go there at least once a week. These baths, taken in common, without distinction of sex, cost but a

few kopecks. As a matter of course, there are for rich people luxurious establishments, where all the elegances of the art of bathing are practiced to perfection.

After a few moments of useless driving, our coachmen, thinking they had shown off enough, turned in their seats and asked us where we wished to go. We replied the Hotel Chevrier, Street of the Old Newspapers. And they resumed their course towards a fixed destination. On the way we looked about eagerly to right and left, without seeing anything at all remarkable. Moscow is built in concentric circles. The exterior is the most modern and least interesting. The Kremlin, which used to be the whole town, is the heart and marrow.

On top of many of the houses, which did not differ much from those of St. Petersburg, were blue cupolas, sprinkled with gold, or bulb-shaped bell-towers, covered with brass. The façade of a church of rococo architecture was colored a brilliant red, its every projection covered with snow, producing a weirdly strange effect; and again the eye was caught by a chapel painted in Marie-Louise blue, that the winter had iced with silver. The question of polychrome architecture, so vigorously debated in France, has been long since decided in Russia; there they gild, they silver, they paint buildings all the colors of the rainbow, without the least thought of good taste or conservatism,

as the pseudo-classicists understand the word, for it is certain that the Greeks gave varied colors to their monuments and even to their statues. It is very amusing to see this rich range of colors applied to architecture, condemned in the West to wan greys, neutral yellows and dirty whites. The signs over the shops bring out like golden ornaments those beautiful letters of the Russian alphabet with their resemblance to the Greek, and could very well be used in decorative friezes, like the cufic letters (Arabian). A translation was given for the benefit of the ignorant or of strangers by the naïve representation of the objects sold in the shop.

We soon reached the hotel, whose great, wooden-paved, court yard contained under sheds a most varied display of carriages, sleighs, troïkas, taren-tasses, droskies, kibitkas, post-chaises, berlins, landaus, *chars-à-bancs*, carriages for summer and for winter, for in Russia no one ever walks, and if a servant is sent for cigars he takes a sleigh to go the hundred feet separating him from the tobacco-shop. We were given rooms brilliant with mirrors, with flowered wall-paper and sumptuous furniture, in the fashion of the great hotels of Paris. Not the smallest vestige of local coloring, but furnished with every comfort. No matter how romantic one may be, one resigns oneself readily to that, so great a hold has civilization on even the most rugged souls. The sole Russian article

was the broad green-leather sofa, on which it is so sweet to sleep, rolled up in one's pelisse.

Our heavy traveling garments hung up and our ablutions made, before sallying out into the town, we thought it would be well to breakfast, so that we should not be disturbed in the midst of our admiration by the imperious demands of the stomach and forced to return to the hotel from the extreme end of some charmingly distant quarter. The meal was served in the middle of a glass room, arranged as a winter garden and full of exotic plants.

To eat in Moscow a beefsteak, with fried potatoes, in a miniature virgin forest, is indeed an odd sensation. The servant who waited upon us, standing a few steps from the table, although wearing a black coat and white cravat, had a yellow skin, prominent cheek-bones and a little flat nose that betrayed his Mongol birth and proclaimed that he could not have been born far from the frontier of China, in spite of his air of a servant in an English café.

Since one cannot observe at his ease the details of a city when carried in a sleigh that flies like lightning, at the risk of being considered a very ordinary person and of incurring the disdain of the moujiks, we resolved to make our first excursion on foot, shod with strong, furred galoches, meant to separate the sole of our shoes from the icy sidewalk, and before long we reached the

Kitai-Gorod, which is the business quarter on the Krasnaia, the red square, or rather the beautiful square, for in Russia the words red and beautiful are synonymous. One of the sides of this square is occupied by the long façade of the Gostiny-Dvor, an immense bazaar, intersected with streets, covered with glass roofs and containing not less than six thousand shops. The wall of the Kremlin or Kreml rises at the other extremity, with its doors pierced in its steep-roofed towers, allowing a glimpse over its battlements of the cupolas, towers and spires of the churches and convents within. At the other corner, strange as the architecture of a dream, rises like a vision the impossible church of Vassili Blajennoi, which causes the reason to doubt the witness of the eyes. One gazes at it with every appearance of reality and asks oneself if it is not a fantastic mirage, an edifice of clouds, strangely colored by the sunshine, that the movement of the air will transform or make vanish. It is beyond doubt the most original monument in the world, recalling nothing that one has ever seen, nor attaching itself to any order of architecture. One might call it a gigantic madrepore, a colossal crystallization, a grotto of stalactites turned upside down. But we will not seek comparisons in order to give an idea of a thing that has neither prototype nor similarity. Let us rather attempt to describe Vassili Blajennoi, if perchance there exists

a vocabulary to tell of what has never been seen before.

A legend is told of Vassili Blajennoi that probably is not true but that does not on that account the less express with force and poetry the feeling of dazed admiration this edifice must have produced at the half-barbarous time in which it was built, so singular, so outside of all architectural traditions. Ivan the Terrible had this cathedral built as a thank-offering for the capture of Kazan, and when it was completed he found it so beautiful, admirable and amazing that he ordered the eyes of the architect,—an Italian, it was said,—to be put out, in order that he might not be able to construct any others like it. According to another version of the same legend, the Tzar asked the author of the church if he could not build a still more beautiful one, and upon his replying in the affirmative, he had his head cut off, so that Vassili Blajennoi should remain without a rival. It would be difficult to imagine a cruelty more flattering in its jealousy, and this Ivan the Terrible must have been at bottom a true artist, an impassioned *dilet-tante*. This ferocity in matters of art displeases us less than indifference.

Fancy to yourself, upon a sort of platform, raised above the surrounding land, the queerest, the most incoherent, the most prodigious pile of cabins, *logettes*, outside staircases, galleries, with arcades, recesses and unexpected projections,



Cathedral of Vassili Blajennoi, Moscow





porehes without symmetry, chapels thrown together pell-mell, windows pierced at hazard, of indescribable forms, a swelling-out of interiors, as if the architect, seated in the middle of his work, had beaten out a building *au repoussé*. From the roof of this church, which could readily be taken for a Hindoo, a Chinese or a Thibetan pagoda, there springs a forest of towers in the strangest taste, and of a fantasy hitherto undreamed of. The centre one, which is the highest and most massive, presents two or three stories, from its base to its spire. There are first little columns and denticulated bands, then come pilasters framing long mullioned windows, then a crowd of superimposed arches, and on the sides of the spire queer corrugations over each rib, the whole terminating in a lantern, surmounted by a golden bulb, reversed, bearing on its point a Russian cross. The others, of less dimensions or less height, take the shape of minarets, and their fantastically carved towers are terminated by the odd swelling of their *cupolas* into queer onion-like shapes. Some are carved into facets, others in squares, others again cut diamond-fashion, like pineapples, others striped in spiral bands, still others made in the shapes of shells, lozenges, or honeycombs, and all holding aloft on their tops the cross ornamented with golden balls. What adds still more to the extraordinary effect produced by the Vassili Blajennoi is that it is colored from base to pinnacle

with the most incongruous colors, which, however, produce an ensemble both harmonious and charming to the eye. Red, blue, apple-green, yellow, each claims its part in the adornment of the building. Columns, capitals, arches, ornaments are painted in different colors that throw them out in powerful relief. In the rare flat spaces, divisions have been simulated, panels enclosing pots of flowers, rosettes, interlacing, chimerical figures. Illumination has storied the domes of the bell-towers with drawings, like the foliage in India shawls, and thus placed, on the roof of the church, they resemble the kiosks of the sultans. M. Hittorf, the apostle of polychrome architecture, would find here a startling confirmation of his theories.

In order that nothing may be lacking to the magic effect of the scene, particles of snow, caught on the projections of the roofs, the friezes and the carvings, scattered silver spangles over the variegated robe of Vassili Blajennoi, adorning with a thousand dazzling points this marvelous decoration.

Putting off to a later date our visit to the Kremlin, we forthwith entered the church of Vassili Blajennoi, whose unusual aspect excited our curiosity to the highest pitch, to see if the interior justified the promise of the exterior. The same fantastic genius had presided at the distribution and ornamentation of the interior. The first low chapel, in which some lamps were flickering, resembled a golden cave. Sudden high-lights flashed

among tawny shadows, and the stiff figures of the Greek saints looked like phantoms. The mosaics of St. Mark's at Venice may give some approximate idea of this effect of untold richness. The iconostase rose in the back, like a wall of gold and precious stones, between the faithful and the secrets of the sanctuary, in a semi-obscurity, partly illumined with shafts of light.

Vassili Blajennoi is not, like all other churches, composed of several naves communicating with and intersecting each other at certain points, according to the law of ritual observed in the construction of a temple. It is formed of a bundle of churches or chapels in juxtaposition and independent of each other. Each tower contains one, that accommodates itself, as best it may, within its mould. The ceiling supports the spire, or the bulb of the cupola. One might fancy oneself under the boundless helmet of some Circassian or Tartar giant. These caps are indeed wonderfully painted and gilded on the inside. There are also walls covered with those figures of hieratic barbarism, of which the Greek monks of Mount Athos have kept the pattern from century to century, that in Russia so often deceive the careless observer as to the age of the monument. One is thrilled with a strange sensation on finding oneself in these mysterious sanctuaries, where the familiar personages of the Catholic religion, mingling with saints peculiar to the Greek calendar, seem, with their archaic,

Byzantine or constrained postures, to be transcribed awkwardly on gold by the childish devotion of some primitive people. These images which gaze at you through the enameled carvings of the iconostases or stand in symmetrical rows against the gilded walls, opening their great fixed eyes and their brown twisted hands, look like idols, and produce by their fierce, extra-human, immutably traditional aspect, a religious impression that the works of more advanced art could never produce. These figures, amid the shining of gold, under the flickering lamp-light, assume easily a fantastic reality capable of striking untutored imaginations, and of inspiring, when the light is dim, a certain sacred horror. Narrow corridors, galleries with low arcades so narrow the arms touch the walls on either side, so low one must bend his head, run around the chapels, giving access to one another. Nothing can be more strange than these passages; the architect's chief desire apparently has been to tangle the skein. You ascend, you descend, you leave the edifice, you return, making the tour of a tower on a cornice, walking inside a wall through windings like capillary tubes of coral or the roads traced by borers under the bark of a tree.

After so many tours and detours, your head whirls, a vertigo seizes you, till you might almost fancy yourself the mollusk in an immense shell. We will not say a word about those mysterious

corners, those inexplicable blind-alleys, those low doors, leading Heaven knows where, those dark staircases descending into the depths, for we would never be done with this building, where one seems to walk as if in a dream.

In Russia the winter days are very short, and already the shades of twilight were beginning to bring into bold relief the flames of the lamps, burning before the images of the saints, when we left Vassili Blajennoi, auguring well, from this example, for the picturesque richness of Moscow. We had just felt that so unusual sensation, whose search pushes the traveler to the extremities of the globe; we had seen something that did not exist elsewhere.

We will acknowledge the bronze group of Minine and Pojarsky, placed near the Gostiny-Dvor, facing the Kremlin, interested us very little as a work of art, although the statues around the group, by Martoss, are not lacking in beauty. But near to the unbridled fantasy of the Vassili Blajennoi, the work seemed too cold, too correct, too entirely academic.

Minine was a butcher of Nijni-Novgorod, who raised an army to chase out the Poles, who had made themselves masters of Moscow in consequence of the usurpation of Boris Godunoff, and placed the command in the hands of Prince Pojarsky. Between the two, the man of the people and the great nobleman delivered the holy city from the

hands of the foreigners, and on the pedestal, adorned with bronze bas-reliefs, is this inscription: "To the mujik Minine and the prince Pojarsky, grateful Russia; in the year 1818."

We have always made it a rule, when we are traveling, and are not too intolerably pressed for time, to stop after having received a strong impression. There is a time when the eye, satiated with forms and colors, refuses to absorb new sensations. Nothing more can enter, as when a vase is brimful. The former image reigns supreme and will not be effaced. In this state, one may look, but does not see. The retina has not had the time to prepare itself for a new impression. That was our case when we issued from Vassili Blajennoi and the Kremlin required a fresh vision, a virgin eye. So, after having cast a last look at the extravagant towers of Ivan the Terrible, we were about to call a sleigh to return to our hotel, when we were detained on the Krasnaïa by a singular noise that made us look up to the sky.

Ravens and crows, croaking as they went, were flying through the grey air which they darkened with their sombre wings. They were returning to the Kremlin for the night, though these were but the advance guard. Soon crowded battalions began to pour in. From every point of the horizon came bands, apparently obedient to the orders of their chiefs, and following a strategic line of march. The black swarms did not fly all at the

same height, but filed along in superimposed layers, actually darkening the air. From minute to minute, their numbers augmented. There were cries and flappings of the wings, till one could not hear oneself speak, and still ever new phalanxes were pouring in over our head, coming to swell the prodigious assembly.

We had not thought there were so many crows and ravens in the whole world. Without exaggeration they were to be counted by the hundreds of thousands. Even this figure seems too modest, and the words "by millions" would be more suitable. It made us think of those flights of ring-doves, of which Audubon, the American ornithologist, speaks, which obscured the sun, bent the forests upon which they alighted, nor were sensibly diminished by the immense slaughter made by the hunters. The numberless army joined together over the Krasnaïa, mounting, descending, describing circles and making the noise of a tempest. At last the winged battalion apparently formed a resolution and each bird directed its course towards his nocturnal abode. In an instant the towers, the cupolas, the bell-towers, the roofs, the battlements, were lost amid black whirlwinds and deafening cries. Places were fought for with beak and claw. The smallest hole, the narrowest fissure, capable of affording shelter, became the object of eager onslaught. Gradually the tumult was hushed, each one settled as best he could, not a single croak was

heard, nor a single bird seen, and the sky, but now dotted over with black spots, resumed the limpid beauty of twilight. One wonders on what could these myriads of birds live, who would devour at one repast all the dead bodies of a battlefield, especially when the ground is covered for six months with a thick sheet of snow. The débris, the dead animals and the garbage of a city would not suffice. Perhaps they eat one another, as do rats in time of famine, but then their numbers would not be so considerable and in the end they would all disappear. And they seem so full of vigor, of animation and of turbulent joy. The manner of their feeding remains still a mystery to us, and proves the instinct of the animal finds in nature resources where the reason of man sees none.

Our companion, who had watched this spectacle with us, but without astonishment, for it was not the first time he had seen "the going to rest of the crows of the Kremlin," said to us: "Since we are on the Krasnaïa, quite near to the most celebrated Russian restaurant, do not let us go back to the hotel to dine, where we will have only an extremely French meal. As a traveler, you have your stomach trained to foreign dishes till it is quite able to enjoy the local color in matters culinary, and agree that what nourishes one man can do the same for another. Let us then go in here and eat chtchi, caviar, milk-pig, sterlet, with the accompaniment of *agourcis* and horse-radish, all

washed down with *kwas* (one ought to taste everything) and champagne frappé. Is this menu to your liking?"

Upon our answering in the affirmative, the friend who was acting as guide took us to a restaurant situated at the extremity of the Gostiny-Dvor, just opposite the Kremlin. We ascended a well-heated staircase, and entered a vestibule that resembled nothing so much as a fur shop. Servants promptly assisted us in taking off our furs, which they hung near the others on a rack. Russian domestics never make a mistake in furs, and at once place your own on your shoulders, without number or any other mark of recognition. The first room was a sort of bar-room, full of bottles of kummel, vodka, cognac and other liqueurs, with caviar, herrings, anchovies, smoked beef, elk and reindeer tongues, cheeses, sweet pickles, delicacies that serve to pique the appetite and taste before the meal. One of those Cremona organs, with trumpets and drums, that the Italians carry about in the streets, placed on a little cart attached to a horse, was standing against the wall, while a moujik was grinding out an operatic air that was popular at the moment.

Numerous rooms filled with the blue smoke of cigars and pipes succeeded each other *en suite*, to such an extent that a second Cremona organ placed at the other end, was able without discord to play a different air from the organ in the first

room. We dined between Donizetti and Verdi. What imparted a peculiarly national characteristic to this restaurant was that instead of being served by Tartars, travestied as waiters of the "Frères Provençaux" the waiting was intrusted quite simply to moujiks. One at least felt as if one were in Russia. These moujiks, young and well-formed, their hair parted in the middle, and beards carefully brushed, with bare necks, and wearing the summer tunic of pink or white drawn in at the waist, loose pantaloons worn inside their boots with all the ease of a national costume, had a grand air and a good deal of natural elegance. Most of them were blonde, that chestnut blonde that legend attributes to the hair of Jesus Christ, and the features of some were marked by that Greek regularity that in Russia is seen much more frequently among the men than among the women. Thus dressed, in the attitude of respectful attention, they looked like the slaves of antiquity at the door of a *triclinium*. After dinner we smoked some pipes of Russian tobacco that was extremely strong and drank several glasses of excellent caravan tea (in Russia no one ever takes tea in cups), while the melodies from the Cremona organ floated disjointedly across the hum of conversation and we were very well satisfied to have dined among so much local coloring.

THE KREMLIN.



## XVII.

### THE KREMLIN.

ONE'S fancy pictures the Kremlin blackened by the passage of time, discolored with that dark color that in France invests old monuments and contributes to their beauty by making them look venerable. We push this idea to such an extent as to cover the new portions of edifices with a coating of soot mixed with water in order to remove the white crudity of the stone and to make them harmonize with the more ancient parts of the buildings. It is only the highest degree of civilization that is capable of understanding this sentiment, and of attaching value to the traces left by the passing of the centuries on the covering of temples, palaces or fortresses. Like all new peoples, the Russians love what is new or at least looks so, and they believe they are demonstrating their respect for a monument by renewing its dress of paint as soon as it is faded or worn. They are the greatest colorers in the world. There is no spot, even to the old frescoes in Byzantine style that ornament the interior and often the exterior of churches, that they do not repaint when their colors seem tarnished; so that these paintings, so

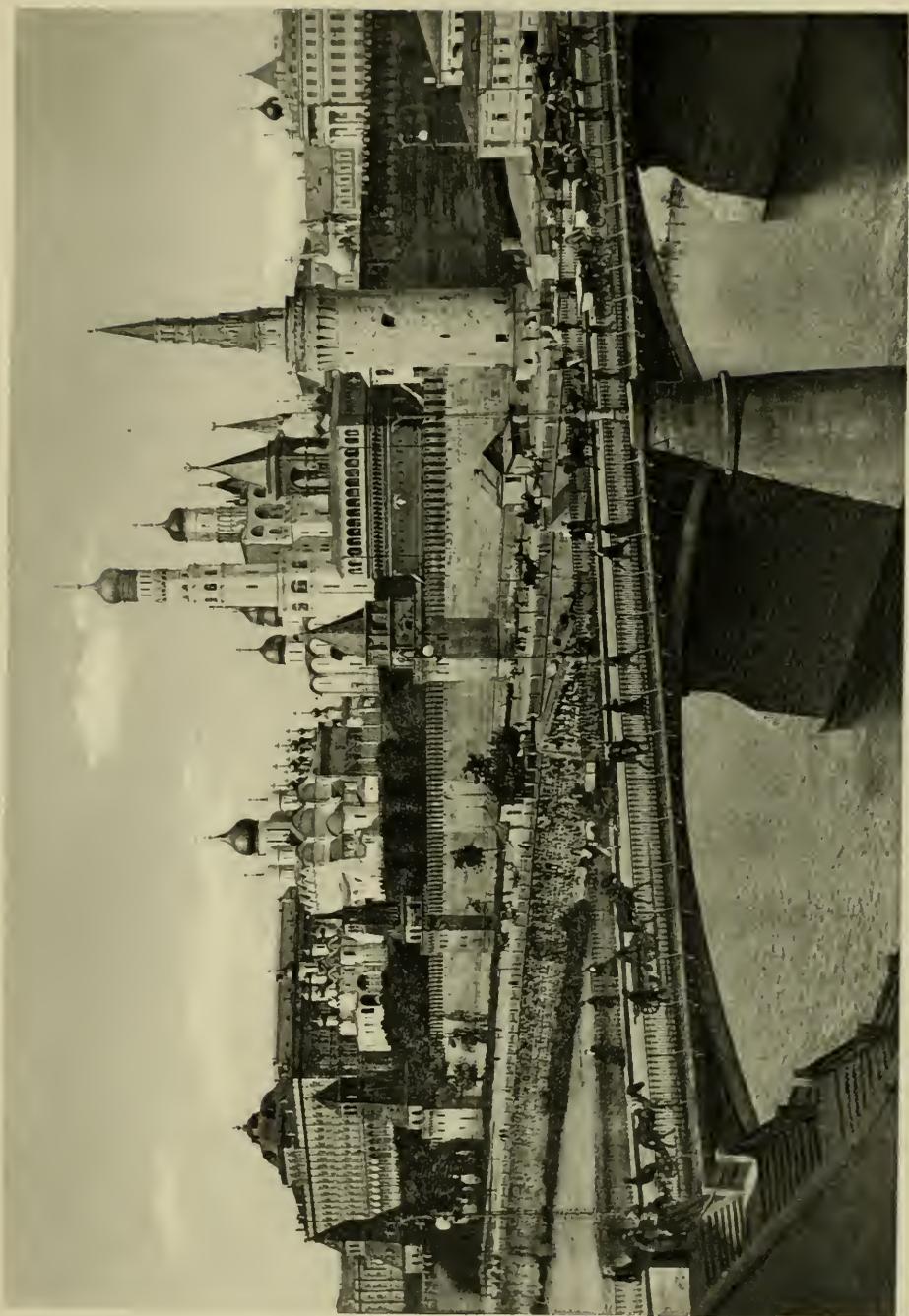
solemnly antique in appearance and of so primitive a barbarism, are often done over, but yesterday. It is by no means an unusual sight to see a dabbler, perched on a light scaffolding, retouching, with all the assurance of a monk of Mount Athos, some Mother of God, and filling with fresh colors the austere contour, which is itself but an immutable *poncif*. So that it is needful to be extremely conservative in expressing one's appreciation of those paintings, that have been ancient, but which are now entirely modern in spite of their stiffness and ecclesiastical rudeness.

All which preamble has simply for end and aim the preparation of the reader for a white and brilliantly colored appearance, instead of the sombre, melancholy and stern one of which, imbued with Western ideas, he had dreamed.

In early times, the Kremlin, considered from its foundation as the acropolis, the holy spot, the palladium, and the very heart of Russia, was surrounded by a palisade of mighty oaken posts. The citadel of Athens possessed no other defense before the Persian invasion. Dmitri-Donskoï replaced the palisade by crenelated walls, which were rebuilt by the Tzar Ivan III., on account of their decayed and tottering condition. It is this wall of Ivan III. that still exists to-day, though often restored and rebuilt in many a place. Thick layers of rough-coating conceal the wounds inflicted by time and the black marks of the great fire of 1812,









that, however, only licked with its tongues of flame the outside wall.

The Kremlin has many points in common with the Alhambra. Like the Moorish fortress, it occupies the flat top of a hill, that is enveloped by its tower-flanked wall; it contains royal demesnes, churches, squares, and among the ancient edifices a modern palace that is embedded among them as infelicitously as the palace of Charles V. among the delicate Arabian architecture, which it crushes with its weight. The tower of Ivan Veliki is in fact by no means unlike the Torre de la Vela; and beyond the Kremlin, as beyond the Alhambra, lies stretched a scene of wonderful beauty, a panorama that the ravished eye holds ever in enchanted remembrance. But we will not push farther these points of resemblance, lest we may be accused of unduly emphasizing them.

Strange as it may seem, the Kremlin, seen from outside, presents a more Oriental appearance than the Alhambra itself, with its massive red towers, that give no hint of the magnificence of its interior. Above the walls with their sloping battlements, peeping between the towers with their carved roofs, are myriads of cupolas, like balls of shining gold, with tulip-shaped bell-towers reflecting in the sunshine a thousand colors from their metallic sides. The wall, white as a silver basket, encloses this bouquet of golden flowers, till one feels as if he were gazing at one of those fairy

cities built by the fancy of the Arabian storytellers, a crystallization in stone of the "Thousand and One Nights." And when winter sprinkles with its diamond powder these buildings, beautiful as a dream, one could readily fancy oneself transported to another planet, for nothing like to it has it ever been one's fortune to behold before.

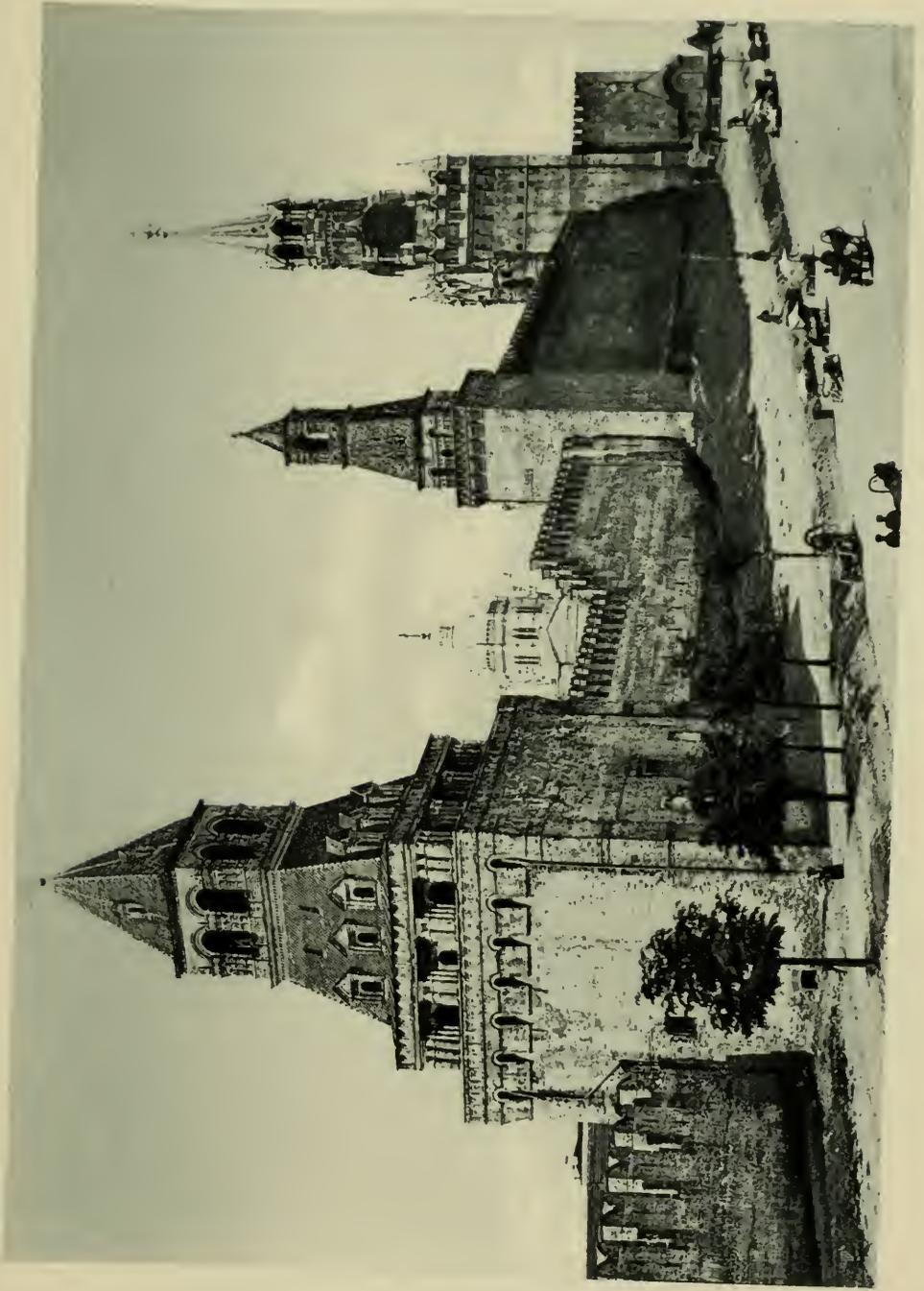
We entered the Kremlin through the Spasskoi gate, which opens on the Krasnaïa. No entrance could possibly be more romantic. It opens in an enormous square tower which is in front of a porch or fore-court. The tower is three stories high, each story receding behind the other, the whole terminating in a spire supported by arches carved in open-work. The double-headed eagle, holding the ball of the world in its claws, is poised on the highest top of the spire, which is octagonal, like the story below it, and is sculptured on its corners and gilded on its sides. Each side of the second story contains an enormous clock, so that the tower points the hour to each point of the compass. To heighten the effect, add to every projection spangles of snow, and you may form some slight idea of the appearance of this queen of towers, rising in three tiers, above the denticulated wall that it breaks. The Spasskoi gate is the object in Russia of so much veneration, on account of some image or miraculous legend, about which we could gain no precise information, that no one ever passes it with covered head, not even the autocrat



The walls of the Kremlin, showing the Spasskoi Gate, Moscow.

The walls of the Kremlin, showing the Spasskoi Gate, Moscow.

The Walls of the Kremlin Showing the Spasskoi Gate, Moscow





himself. To treat it with irreverence would be regarded as sacrilege, and would probably be very dangerous. Strangers are always promptly warned of the custom. It is not merely expected that you should salute the holy images at the entrance of the porch, before which lamps are perpetually burning, but also to remain uncovered until you are entirely outside the building. Now it is not the most agreeable thing in the world to hold one's fur bonnet in one's hand, when the thermometer is some twenty degrees below zero, in a long corridor swept by an icy wind. But it is always proper to conform to the customs of a nation, and the true traveler must make no objection to taking off his bonnet under the Spasskoi gate or his shoes on the threshold of the Solimanieh or the St. Sophia, even were he to take the most terrible cold in the world.

It is through this gate that the esplanade of the Kremlin is reached, which is surrounded by the most magnificent churches, monasteries, and palaces of which the imagination can dream. It does not belong to any particular known style. It is neither Greek nor Byzantine nor Gothic nor Arabian nor Chinese; it is Russian, it is Muscovite. Never did a freer, more original architecture, nor one more careless of all rules, nor more romantic, realize its caprices with such absolute freedom. At times its designs resemble the accidents of crystal formations. Still the cupolas, the bell-towers with

their golden bulbs, are peculiarly characteristic of this style, that apparently recognizes no law, and announces the fact quite frankly from the beginning.

From this esplanade, in which are grouped the principal edifices of the Kremlin and which forms the apex of the hill, winds downwards, following the inequalities of the ground, a rampart, flanked with towers of infinite variety, some round, others square, these slender as minarets, those massive as bastions, with galleries, receding stories, roofs with carved sides, lanterns, spires, shell-work, carvings, every imaginable fashion of adorning the top of a tower. The battlements, that make deep indentations in the wall and are cut in notches at the top like the end of an arrow, are alternately plain or pierced with barbicans. We have no idea of the value of this defense from a strategic point of view, but from a poetical one it abundantly satisfies the imagination and gives the idea of a formidable citadel.

Between the rampart and the ground are the gardens, enclosed with a balustrade, and at this season sprinkled with snow, while in the middle rises a picturesque little church with bulb bell-towers.

Beyond lies, as far as the eye can reach, the great panorama of Moseow, to which the pointed top of the wall affords an admirable support and setting for the distant horizon, so exquisite that

the most careful art could not have better disposed it.

The Moskwa, that winds like the Seine and is about as broad, flows all around this side of the Kremlin, and from the esplanade it may be seen shining like a piece of opaque glass, for it had just been swept free from snow, to make ready for races with sleighs which were soon to take place on the ice.

The quay, bordered with hotels and superb houses built in modern style, forms, as it were, a base to the vast sea of houses and roofs that stretch in endless array towards the horizon as far as the eye can reach.

A beautiful freeze—a word that would make Méry shiver with horror, for this chilly poet declares that all cold is abominable—had chased from the sky its low, monotonous covering of yellowish grey which the evening before had been stretched like a curtain over the horizon, and a deep azure tinted the circular canvas of the panorama, while the frost made the snow more crisp and increased its whiteness. A pale ray of sunshine, such as in the month of January lights the short winter days in Moscow, bringing to mind the closeness of the pole, fell obliquely over the city, lying like a fan around the Kremlin, and touched the snow-covered roofs, making them shine here and there like pieces of mica. Rising above these white roofs, like flakes of foam in a frozen tempest, were scattered, like

ships or rocks, the tops of the public monuments, temples, and monasteries. Moscow is said to have more than three hundred churches and convents. We do not know whether this figure is exact or not, but it would seem to be true, as one looks at the town from the height of the Kremlin, which includes within its own walls a great number of cathedrals, chapels and religious edifices.

The imagination can paint nothing more beautiful, more rich, more splendid, more fairy-like, than these cupolas surmounted by Greek crosses, these swelling, bulbous-shaped towers, these spires with six or eight sides carved in open-work, round, hollow, pointed, over the motionless array of snowy roofs. The golden cupolas assume reflections of wondrous transparency, and the sunlight focuses on some prominent, starry point, till it shines like a lamp. The silver or copper domes seem to cover churches in the moon. Further on are azure helmets starred with gold, caps made of beaten copper plates, like the scales of a dragon, or else onions turned upside down, painted green and glazed with sparkling snow; then as they grow more distant, the details disappear even from the lorgnette, and are blended into a shining cluster of domes, spires, towers, campaniles of every possible form, whose silhouettes stand up clearly against the distant blue, with ever and anon a sparkle of gold, silver, copper, sapphire or emerald. And to complete the picture, fancy on the cold, bluish tones of the snow,

trails of delicate purple or pale rose light from the polar setting sun, falling over the ermine carpet of the Russian winter.

We stood there insensible to the cold, absorbed in silent contemplation and lost in a very wonder of admiration.

No other city conveys this impression of absolute novelty, not even Venice, for which Canaletto, Guardi, Bonington, Joyant, Wyld, Ziem and photographs, have in a way prepared you. Moscow has not yet been much visited by artists, and its strange aspects have not been much reproduced. The rigorous Northern climate adds to the singularity of its decorative effect by the snows, the unusual coloring of the sky, the quality of the light, which is not at all like that of Southern Europe but gives to the Russian painters a special range of colors, the truth of which it is difficult to understand outside of the country.

On the esplanade of the Kremlin, the panorama of Moscow lying at one's feet, one indeed feels as if in another world, and no one, no matter how much in love with his own country, can regret foregoing its joys for a time, if he may be thus recompensed.

The Kremlin contains within its enclosure a vast number of churches or cathedrals, as the Russians call them. Just as the Acropolis, on its narrow plateau, united a great number of temples. We will visit each in turn, but first of all will stop at

the tower of Ivan Veliki, an enormous octagon bell-tower, containing three receding stories, of which the last, springing from a zone of carvings, is a round tower, terminated by an arched cupola, gilded with sterling gold applied by fire, and topped by a Greek cross whose base is the conquered crescent. In each story, an arch cut on each side of the tower exposes to view the brass sides of a bell. There are thirty-three of them, among which, it is said, is the famous bell of Novgorod, whose ringing used to summon the people to their tumultuous deliberations in the public place. One of these bells weighs sixty thousand kilogrammes, so that the great bell of Notre Dame, of which Quasimodo was so proud, would seem, by the side of this monster, like a little bell for the service of the mass.

Apparently in Russia there is a passion for colossal bells, for near the Ivan Veliki tower the astonished eye perceives on a granite base a bell of such enormous size that it could readily be taken for a bronze tent; all the more so, since a broad fissure in its side forms a sort of door through which a man could easily enter without bending his head. It was cast by order of the Empress Anne, and ten thousand pounds of metal were thrown into the furnace. M. de Montferrand, the architect of St. Isaac's, had it taken out of the earth, in which it was lying half-buried, either through the violence of its fall when it was being









raised, or on account of a fire or the collapse of a building. Has such a mass of metal ever been suspended? Has its great iron tongue ever scattered abroad a tempest of sound from its mighty sides? On this point, both history and legend are silent. Perhaps, like those ancient peoples who used to leave in their abandoned camps beds twelve feet long, to impress upon others the belief that they belonged to a race of giants, the Russians desired to give, by means of this bell so in disproportion to all human usage, to distant posterity a gigantic idea of themselves, if perchance, after centuries had rolled away, it might be found in some excavation.

However this may be, this bell possesses a beauty of its own, as is always the case with things outside of ordinary dimensions. The grace of size, a monstrous, perhaps barbarous, but none the less a real grace, is not lacking in it. Its sides swell out in ample, powerful curves, encircled with delicate ornaments. A globe surmounts the cross on the top, and it delights the eye by the purity of its form and the color of its metal, while even the crack down its side opens like the entrance to a dark, mysterious cavern. At the bottom of the pedestal, like a leaf unhooked from a door, is placed the piece of metal representing the empty space in the opening. But we have talked long enough about bells, so let us enter one of the most ancient and characteristic cathedrals of the Krem-

lin, the first to be built of stone, the cathedral of the Assumption (Ouspenski-sobor). It is not, of course, the early building founded by Ivan Kalita that we have before our eyes. That fell into decay after a century and a half of existence, and Ivan III. had it rebuilt. The present cathedral dates but from the fifteenth century, in spite of its Byzantine appearance and archaic aspect. One is surprised to learn that it was built by Fioraventi, an architect of Bologna, whom the Russians called Aristotle, probably on account of his learning. The idea that would naturally present itself would be that of a Greek architect summoned from Constantinople, his head filled with St. Sophia and types of Greco-Oriental architecture. The Assumption is nearly square and its great walls rise straight upwards with all the pride of strength. Four enormous pillars, as large as towers, mighty as the columns of Karnak, support the central cupola, placed on a flat roof, in Asiatic style, and flanked with four smaller cupolas.

This so simple disposition produces a grandiose effect, and these massive pillars give without heaviness a firm seat and extraordinary stability to the body of the cathedral. The interior of the church is covered with paintings in Byzantine style on a background of gold. The pillars themselves are decorated with personages arranged in rows, like the columns of Egyptian temples or palaces. Nothing could be more strange than this ornamen-

tation, where thousands of figures surround you like a silent crowd, ascending and descending the length of the walls, walking in files and crowds or standing alone in an attitude of hieratic stiffness, curving around pendentives, arches, cupolas, and furnishing the temple with a human tapestry, a motionless crowd. A dim light, discreetly arranged, adds still more to the awful, mystic effect. The great, fierce saints of the Greek calendar assume in this tawny uncertain light most formidable aspects; they gaze with wide-open eyes, and seem to threaten with hands that are extended only to bless.

The militant archangels, the cavalier saints, elegant and brave, mingle in brilliant armor among the sombre frocks of monks and anchorites. They have that pride of bearing, that ancient hauteur, that marks the figures of Panselinos, the Byzantine painter, master of the monks of Agria Lavria, from which Papety has made such exquisite drawings. The interior of St. Mark's in Venice, with its appearance of a golden cavern, may give an approximate idea of the cathedral of the Assumption, only the body of the Muscovite church rises in a single reach toward the sky, while the lower arches of St. Mark's resemble those of a crypt.

The iconostase, a high vermilion wall with five rows of figures, is like the façade of some golden palace, dazzling the eye with its fabulous magnificence.

Through apertures in the gold carvings appear the brown heads and hands of Madonnas, and of male and female saints. Their aureoles, standing out in relief, catch the light, while the precious stones with which they are incrustated blaze with glory; on the images, which are objects of especial veneration, are breast-plates of precious stones, necklaces and bracelets, starry with diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, amethysts, pearls, and turquoises: the passion of religious luxury could not reach greater heights.

What a charming idea in decoration are these iconostases, a golden, jewelled veil spread between the faithful and the mysteries of the holy sacrifice! It must be acknowledged that the Russians manage great effects with it, and that as far as magnificence is concerned the Greek religion is by no means inferior to the Catholic worship, if it is not quite its equal within the domain of pure art.

The tunic of Our Lord, enclosed in a reliquary of inestimable value, is kept in the cathedral of the Assumption. The other reliquaries, blazing with jewels, contain a piece of the Virgin's dress, and a nail of the true cross. The Virgin of Vladimir, painted by the hand of St. Luke, which the Russians regard as a palladium, whose exhibition hurled back the fierce hordes of Tamerlane, is adorned with a solitaire diamond worth more than twenty thousand dollars, while the mass of gold-work framing it cost two or three times that

amount. Doubtless this display may seem rather barbarous to a fastidious taste, more in love with beauty than wealth, but at the same time it cannot be denied that these masses of gold, diamonds and pearls produce a religious and splendid effect. These virgins, whose casket is more richly furnished than that of queens or empresses, impress simple piety. They assume, amid the shadows and the flickering light of lamps, a supernatural glory, while their diamond crowns shine like starry crowns. From the centre of the ceiling descends a chandelier of massive silver, circular in shape and of exquisite workmanship, that replaces the ancient one of great weight that was carried off during the invasion of the French. There are forty-six branches.

The coronation of the emperor takes place in this cathedral. The stage upon which they stand is placed between the four pillars that support the cupola, opposite the iconostase.

The tombs of the metropolitans of Moscow occupy the side walls. They are oblong in shape, are ranged against the wall, and resemble amid the twilight that envelops them trunks packed for the great journey of eternity. The cathedral of the Holy Archangels, whose façade turns obliquely towards the church of the Assumption, and is but a few steps distant, resembles it in every essential. There is always the same arrangement of swelling cupolas, of massive pillars, of iconostases blazing

with gold, of Byzantine paintings clothing its interior as if with a sacred tapestry. Only here the pictures are not on a gold foundation, and look more like frescoes than mosaics. They represent the scenes of the last judgment and also the haughty, stern portraits of the ancient Russian Tzars.

Here are, too, their tombs, covered with cashmeres and rich stuffs like the monuments of the sultans in Constantinople. They are simple, sober, severe. Death is not beautified with the delicate touches of Gothic art, to which the tomb has given its happiest themes of ornament. No kneeling angels, no emblematic virtues, no weeping figures, no saints in carved niches nor fantastic flourishes around coats of arms, no knights in full armor, their heads on marble cushions, their feet on sleeping lions; nothing but the body in its funeral chest, covered with its grave-cloth. Doubtless art loses much, but religious impression gains.

In the cathedral of the Annunciation, which is built against the back of the Tzar's palace, you are shown a very curious and rare painting representing the angel Gabriel announcing to the Holy Virgin that the Son of God should be born of her. The interview takes place near a well, like that of Jesus and the Samaritan. According to the tradition of the Greek church, it was later, after her humble acquiescence in the will of the Lord, that

the Holy Virgin is visited in her own dwelling by the Holy Spirit.

This scene, painted on the exterior wall of the church, is protected by a sort of screen from the inclemency of the weather. To give an idea of the interior richness of the church, a single detail will suffice. The pavement is made of agates brought from Greece.

Alongside of the new palace and quite close to these edifices, is a strange building, entirely outside of all known styles of architecture of Asiatic or Tartar physiognomy, which is for a civil monument what the Vassili Blajennoi is for a religious one, the conception, reduced to material form, of a sumptuous, barbaric, fanciful imagination. It was built under Ivan III. by the architect Aleviso. Above its roof rise in graceful, picturesque confusion the gold-roofed turrets of its chapels and oratories. An outside staircase, on which the emperor shows himself to his people after his coronation, gives access to them and produces with all its carved projections an original feature in the architecture. It is as well known in Moscow as the Giants' Staircase in Venice, and is one of the curiosities of the Kremlin. It is called in Russian Krasnoe-Kriltso (the Red Staircase).

The interior of the palace, the residence of the Tzars, simply defies description. It might be said that its chambers and passages had been excavated, without plan or design, out of an immense block

of stone, so tangled are they in such queer, complicated, bewildering a fashion, changing their level and direction according to the caprice of an unbridled fancy. One wanders about it as if in a dream, now arrested by a door that opens mysteriously, now forced to follow a dark passage, so narrow that one squeezes through it with difficulty, sometimes having no other route than the jagged edge of a cornice close to the copper plates of the roof and the bulbs of the bell-towers, ascending, descending, no longer knowing where one is, seeing in the distance through the golden trellis-work the light from a lamp flash on the goldwork of the iconostases, or coming, after an interminable journey inside, into some great hall loaded down with a very madness of decoration and richness, in the end of which one would not be surprised to find the Great Kniaz of Tartary seated, with crossed legs, upon his carpet of black felt.

Such, for example, is the hall that is called the Golden Chamber, which occupies all the interior of the palace *à facettes* (Granovitaïa Palata), thus named doubtless on account of its walls cut in diamond points. This palace borders on the old palace of the Tzars. The golden arches of this hall are supported on a central pillar, by means of areatures whose thick gilded iron bars, reaching from one arch to the other, hold all firmly together.

Pictures scattered here and there give dark touches to the tawny splendor of the walls. On

the cordon of the arches run legends in ancient Slavonic letters, magnificent characters, that lend themselves as readily to ornamentation as the Arabic. It would not be possible to conceive of a richer, more mysterious, more sombre and at the same time more brilliant decoration than that of the Golden Chamber. Shakespearean romanticism would love to place there the *dénouement* of a drama.

Certain vaulted rooms of the old palace are so low that a man a little over the ordinary height can scarcely stand up straight in them. There it was that, in an atmosphere heated to suffocation, the women, seated in Oriental fashion upon piles of rugs, used to pass the long hours of the Russian winter watching, through tiny windows, the snow fall upon the golden cupolas and the ravens describe their large circles around the bell-towers.

These apartments, a very medley of paintings, in which palms, boughs and flowers recall the designs of cashmere shawls, bring to mind the Asiatic harems, transported into the polar cold. The true Muscovite taste, depreciated later by imitation of the ill-comprehended arts of the West, appears here in all its primitive originality and harsh, barbarous coloring. We have frequently remarked that the progress of civilization seems to take away from peoples the sense of architecture and ornament. The ancient buildings of the Kremlin are but another proof of this assertion, which may

appear at first sight paradoxical. An inexhaustible fancy presides at the decoration of these mysterious chambers, where gold, green, blue, red, mingle with a rare felicity, producing charming effects. This architecture, without the least care for symmetrical correspondences, assumes shape like soap bubbles that are blown on a plate from a clay pipe. Each globule joins itself to its neighbor, fitting into its angles and facets, and the whole shines with the varied colors of the rainbow. This apparently childish, unusual comparison gives a better idea than any other of the manner in which these fanciful palaces are crowded together.

We could have wished the New Palace had been built in the same fashion. It is an immense construction, in modern taste, which would be full of beauty anywhere else, but which is singularly out of place in the middle of the Kremlin. Classic architecture, with its great cold lines, seems still more tiresomely solemn among these palaces with their queer shapes, their brilliant colors and their tumult of churches of Oriental fashioning, tossing heavenward a golden forest of cupolas, domes, pyramids and bulbous towers. One could fancy oneself at the sight of this Muscovite architecture in some fabulous city of Asia, where the cathedrals would be mosques, the bell-towers minarets, till the excellent façade of the New Palace deposits one in the middle of full Western civilization, a sad thing for a romantic barbarian of our sort.

The New Palace is entered by a staircase of magnificent proportions, closed at the top by a superb gate of polished iron, which opens a little way to permit the passage of the visitor, who finds himself in a hall with a cupola, where a guard is mounted, that is never relieved from duty: four manikins clothed from head to foot in curious, antique Slavonic armor. These cavaliers have a very grand air, portraying life to perfection; it seems impossible that no heart beats under their coats of mail. These suits of armor, arranged in this guise from the Middle Ages, always give us an involuntary shiver. They preserve so faithfully the exterior form of the man who has forever disappeared.

From this rotunda start two galleries containing countless riches. The treasure of the calif Haroun-al-Raschid, the wells of Aboui-Kasem, the Green Vault of Dresden united in one, would not present such accumulation of wonders, while here, too, the historic value adds to the material one. There lie in blazing, radiant loveliness, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, all the precious stones that avaricious nature conceals in the depths of her mines and which are here scattered about as if they were but glass. They form constellations on crowns, place flashes of light on the ends of sceptres, fall in shining showers over the insignia of the empire, form arabesques and eiphers, where the gold in which they are placed can scarcely be seen. The

eye is dazzled, the mind scarcely dares attempt to compute the sums represented by all this magnificence. It would be madness to attempt to describe this prodigious jewel-casket. An entire book would not suffice, so we must content ourself with noting a few of the most remarkable pieces. One of the most ancient crowns is that of Vladimir Monomakh. It was a present from the emperor Alexius Comnenus, and was brought from Constantinople to Kief by a Greek embassy in 1116. Besides the historic memory attached to it, it is a work of the most exquisite taste. On a foundation of gold filigree are incrustated pearls and other jewels arranged with admirable understanding of the art of ornamentation. The crowns of Astrakhan and Kazan in Oriental taste, the one sewn with turquoises, the other surmounted by an enormous uncut emerald, are jewels that would reduce the modern goldsmith to desperation. The crown of Siberia is made of cloth of gold; like all the others it has a Greek cross at the top and, like them too, is studded with diamonds, sapphires and pearls. The gold sceptre of Vladimir Monomakh, more than a yard long, contains two hundred and sixty-eight diamonds, three hundred and sixty rubies, and fifteen emeralds. The enamels that cover the place left free by the jewels represent religious subjects, treated in the Byzantine manner; it too was a gift from Alexius Comnenus, as well as the reliquary in form of a cross containing a fragment of stone of

the tomb of our Lord, and a piece of His cross. A gold casket bristling with gems contains these treasures. A curious jewel is the chain of the first of the Romanoffs, upon each ring of which is engraved one of the titles of this Tzar and a part of a prayer, and there are ninety-nine in all. We can not stop to enumerate the thrones, globes, sceptres and crowns of different reigns, but will remark that if the value is always the same, the purity of taste and the delicacy of workmanship diminish in proportion as they approach modern times.

Something not less wonderful, but more accessible to description, is the hall containing the gold and silver plate. Around the pillars are placed circular credences, in form of dressers, that contain an infinitude of vases, pitchers, ewers, flagons, tumblers, drinking-cups, bottles, flasks, jars, little barrels, cups, goblets, pint-cups, gourds, amphoræ, all that relates to "Drinking," as Rabelais expresses it in his Pantagrueion language. Behind all these flash gold and enameled dishes, as large as those in which the Burgraves of Victor Hugo had whole oxen served.

Each dish has a top, and such a top! Some are full three and four feet high and could only be lifted by the hand of a Titan. What an enormous use of the imagination was necessary to create this variety of plate! Every form capable of containing fluid,—wine, mead, beer, *kwas*, brandy,—has been exhausted. And what taste—rich,

fanciful, grotesque—has been used in the ornamentation of these vessels of gold, silver, and enamel! Sometimes bacchantes with chubby, smiling faces are dancing around the body of the vessel; sometimes fruits and flowers are intermingled with animals and hunting scenes; again dragons are twisted into handles, or else antique medals are incrustated on the sides of cups, or a Roman triumph files past, with music and flying banners, or Jews, in Dutch costumes, carrying the grapes of the promised land, or mythological nudity contemplated by satyrs through tufted arabesques. At the caprice of the artist, vases assume the forms of animals, swelling out as a bear, or lengthening into a stork, with the outstretched wings of an eagle, or the thick form of a duck, from whose back branch the antlers of a stag. Over yonder a bonbon-holder takes the form of a ship, with swelling sails and spread pavilions, having received its dainty cargo through its hatchway. Every possible fancy of the goldsmith has been realized in this prodigious sideboard.

The hall of armor holds treasures that would exhaust the pen of the most intrepid enumerator. Circassian helmets, coats of mail, covered with verses from the Koran, bucklers with bosses of filigree, scimiters, kandjars with jade handles, and jewelled sheaths, all those arms of the Orient, that are at the same time jewels, sparkle amid the sternest weapons of the West. At the sight of









such boundless riches one's head grows giddy, and one cries for respite to the too complaisant guide, who is unwilling to omit a single piece.

We simply gloated over the chapter-chambers of the different orders of Russian chivalry. The orders of St. George, St. Alexander, St. Andrew, and St. Catherine occupy each one a vast gallery, where the *motifs* of decoration are taken from their coats of arms. Heraldic art is eminently decorative, and its applications to monuments always produce excellent results. It may be imagined, without entering into detail, with what superb luxury the apartments of state are furnished. All that modern taste has been able to devise of the beautiful or costly, is gathered there without thought of expense, and nothing recalls the charming, Muscovite taste, though the modern style would seem to be demanded by that of the palace. But what greatly surprised us, was to find ourselves in the last of the rooms face to face with a pale phantom in white marble, clad as for apotheosis, which fixed upon us its great motionless eyes and stood, with bent head and meditative air, like a Roman emperor. Napoleon at Moscow, in the palace of the Tzar; we certainly had not expected such a meeting!



TROITZA.



## XVIII.

### TROITZA.

WHEN one has a few days' leisure, after having seen the principal curiosities of Moscow, there is an excursion that everyone assures you must be made, and which in fact should be undertaken with eagerness. It is a visit to the convent of Troitza. The journey is quite worth the trouble, and no one will repent having accomplished it.

It was then fully understood that we were to go to Troitza, and our Russian friend, who had kindly assumed the charge of piloting us, busied himself with preparations for our departure. He engaged a kibitka and sent on ahead a relay of horses, that we should take when half-way on our journey; for this trip, if one starts in good time, can be accomplished in a half-day, and one arrives early enough to get a general idea of the building and of its situation. So we were commanded to be afoot by three o'clock in the morning. The habit of traveling gives the faculty of waking at the precise moment desired without having recourse to alarm-clocks with their interminable tintinnabulations. So that we were up and already prepared for the journey by a slice of meat and a glass of

very hot tea,—the tea in Moscow is delicious—when the kibitka stopped before the door of the inn.

In essaying to tell the time through the double sashes of the window, we noticed that the inside thermometer marked sixty-six degrees above, and the outside one thirty-eight degrees below zero. A little wind that had refreshed itself on the icebergs of the pole had been blowing during the night and had brought in its train a glacial cold.

Thirty-eight degrees below zero is enough, when one thinks of it, to give a chill to the least chilly natures; happily we had already undergone all the rigors of a Russian winter, and had grown accustomed to those temperatures made for reindeer and white bears.

Still, since we were to be in the open air for an entire day, we dressed ourselves suitably: two shirts, two waistcoats, two pairs of trousers, enough to clothe from head to foot a second person. On the feet woolen stockings with white felt boots which were covered by another pair of boots reaching to the knee; on the head a bonnet of beaver fur, warmly wadded; on the hands Samoiede mittens, which leave but the thumb free, and over everything an immense fur pelisse with a collar in the back reaching as high as the top of the head, in order to protect the back of the neck, and fastened in front with hooks, in order to protect the face. In addition, a long band of knit

wool was wrapped five or six times around the body, like a cord tied tightly around a package, to prevent any possibility of air slipping through a hiatus in the pelisse. Bundled up in this fashion, we looked like a sentry-box, and in the warm air of the room these superimposed garments felt terribly heavy, as if we could not endure them; but when we found ourselves in the atmosphere of the street they seemed as light as a nankeen suit.

The kibitka was awaiting us, while the impatient horses, shaking their long manes, lowered their heads and bit the snow. A few words apropos of our vehicle. A kibitka is a sort of chest resembling a cabin as much as a carriage, placed on the framework of a sleigh. It has a door and a window, which must never be closed, for the vapor of one's breath condensed on the glass would be changed into ice, so that one would be deprived of air and plunged into semi-darkness.

We stowed ourselves away as comfortably as possible in the back of the kibitka, as tightly packed as sardines; for, although there were but three of us, the quantity of garments with which we were loaded caused us to occupy the room of six people; traveling rugs were thrown over our knees, by way of extra precaution, and we were off.

It was about four o'clock in the morning. The stars twinkled merrily in the dark blue of the sky, with that clearness that indicates the intensity of the cold; under the steel runners of the kibitka the

snow crunched like a glass one scratches with a diamond. For the rest, there was not a breath of air; it was as if the very wind itself was frozen.

A candle might have been carried in one's hand, without a flickering of the flame. The wind augments terribly the severity of the temperature; it transforms the motionless cold into active cold, and of particles of ice makes steel arrow points. It was, in a word, what in Moscow, towards the end of January, might be called fine weather.

Russian coachmen love to go fast, and it is a taste in which the horses join. They must be held in, rather than urged on. Every departure takes place with lightning speed, and when one is not familiar with this little habit one is sure that the horses have taken the bit between their teeth. Ours were no exception to this law and galloped along madly in the solitude and silence of the streets of Moscow, that were dimly lighted by the reflection from the snow, in default of the dying flames of the frozen lamps. Houses, buildings, churches, fled rapidly by, to right and left, their dark outlines curiously picked out with white touches, for no darkness entirely extinguishes the silver brightness of the snow. Sometimes the cupolas of the chapels, but half seen, produced the effect of giant helmets protruding beyond the ramparts of some fantastic fortress; the silence was undisturbed save by the guardians of the night, who walked with

regular step, trailing behind them their iron batons on the sidewalks to testify to their vigilance.

At the rate at which we were going, although Moscow was vast, we had soon passed the wall of the town, and the street had been succeeded by the road. The houses grew less frequent, then disappeared, and on either side of the road the country stretched in dim whiteness under the nocturnal sky. It gives one a strange sensation to fly at lightning speed across this pale, undefined landscape, enveloped in its monotonous whiteness, that is like a plain in the moon, in the midst of sleeping men and beasts, without hearing other sound than the beating of the horses' hoofs and the creaking of the runners of the sleigh over the snow. One might fancy himself in an uninhabited globe.

While we were thus galloping along, the conversation, by one of those sudden transitions of which Edgar Poe's Augustus Dupin so well knew how to recover the thread, and which at times brings in phrases wonderfully strange to the listener who is not in the secret,—turned to whom? to what? We will give you a thousand guesses—to Robinson Crusoe. What circumstance could have aroused in our brain the thought of Robinson Crusoe, on the road from Moscow to Troitza, between five and six in the morning, in a temperature thirty degrees below zero, that certainly did not recall the climate of the island of Juan Fernandez, where Daniel De Foe's hero passed so many soli-

tary years. A peasant's cottage, built with logs, which appeared for an instant on the edge of the road, awoke confusedly within us the memory of the house built by Robinson of the trunks of trees, at the entrance of his grotto; but this fugitive idea was disappearing without any reference to the present situation, when the "snow," which we were watching absently, recalled forcibly Robinson's face, about to vanish in the mist of vague dreams. Towards the end of the book, after his deliverance and return to civilization, Robinson used to make long journeys, and crossing with his little caravan the snow-covered plains of Siberia, was attacked by bands of wolves, who made him run as many risks as the cannibals who came to his island.

Thus it was that the idea of Robinson came to us, in accordance with a secret logic, easy of elucidation to an attentive mind. To pass thence to the possibilities of an apparition of wolves on the road was fatally easy. So the conversation turned insensibly towards this subject, engrossing enough, in the midst of a vast, snowy solitude, darkened here and there with red spots indicating the presence of pine and birch forests. The most terrible stories were told of travelers assailed and devoured by bands of wolves. We finally wound up the subject by recounting that legend that Balzac had once told, with all the absolute seriousness he carried into his jokes. It was the story of a Lithua-

nian nobleman and his wife, going from their château to another castle where a ball was to be given. On the way, at the corner of a wood, where they were ambushed, a pack of wolves were awaiting the carriage. The horses, pushed to desperation by the coachman, and their own terror, broke into a wild gallop followed by the whole pack, whose eyes shone like fire in the track of the carriage. The nobleman and his wife, more dead than alive, cowering each in his corner motionless with fright, fancied they heard confusedly behind them sighs, pantings, and the cracking of jaws; at last they reached the castle; whose gate, as it closed on them, cut two or three wolves in half. The coachman stopped under the porch and, as no one got down to open the carriage door, looked round and beheld the skeletons of two footmen, absolutely denuded of flesh, sitting erect in back of the carriage in the classic position. "Those are what I call well-trained servants," cried Balzac, "such are not to be found nowadays in France!"

This absurd story would not, however, prevent one or more wolves, starved as they are at this season of the winter, from pleasing themselves by giving us chase. We had no arms, and our only chance of safety would then lie in the swiftness of our horses and the neighborhood of some habitation. It would scarcely have been gay, but we laughed over it, and the laughter chased away the anxiety, and besides the day began to dawn, the

day, that dissipates all chimeras, and sends wild beasts into their lairs. It is scarcely necessary to say we did not see even the tail of the smallest wolf.

The night had been brilliant with stars, but towards morning mists had risen on the horizon and the Muscovite Aurora appeared pale, with eyes cast down in a wan light. It is possible that her nose was red, but the epithet that Homer applies to the Greek Aurora of "rosy-fingered" could not have been suited to her. However, her light allowed us to see, in all its extent, the grey though by no means commonplace landscape that was unfolded around us.

The reproach may be made that our descriptions resemble each other, but monotony is one of the characteristics of a Russian landscape, at least in the country we were crossing. They are immense, gently undulating plains, in which are found no other eminences than the projections on which are built the Kremlin of Moscow and the Kremlin of Nijni-Novgorod, which are by no means lofty. The snow, covering as it does these level plains four or five months of the year, adds to the monotony of their appearance by filling up the depressions and the beds of the rivers, so that all that can be seen for hundreds of leagues is an endless white covering, slightly raised here and there by the inequalities of the covered earth and, according to the position of the sun, streaked with

pink lights or blue shadows; but when the sky has its ordinary tone, that is to say a leaden grey, the general color is a dead white. At greater or less distances lines of red brushwood, half-emerging from the snow, interrupt the vast whiteness. Woods of pines and birches make ever and anon dark patches against the sky, while great posts like telegraph poles indicate the road. Near by are a few log cabins, calked with moss, with roofs whose rafters cross and form a sort of X at the top, while little low villages surmounted by a church with bulbous towers are sharply outlined against the edge of the horizon. Not a living creature save the circling crows and ravens, or perchance a moujik seated on his sleigh drawn by tiny, long-haired horses, carrying wood or some other necessity to a habitation in the interior part of an estate. Such is the landscape, that is reproduced to satiety, that forms itself around you, as you advance, as the waves of the sea ceaselessly re-form around the prow of a ship, always seeming exactly alike. Although any picturesque incident is of rare occurrence, one never wearies of watching these immense stretches which inspire one with an indefinable melancholy, as always happens with the grand, silent and solitary. Often, in spite of the rapid pace at which the horses are traveling, one could fancy oneself to be in the same spot.

We arrived at the relay station, whose Russian name we have forgotten. It was a wooden house,

with a courtyard encumbered with télégas and sleighs of rather wretched appearance. In the low room, moujiks in touloupes spotted with grease, with blonde beards, their red faces brightened by eyes of true polar blue, were grouped around a copper urn drinking tea, while others were lying asleep on benches near the stove. Some, more chilly, were even sleeping on top of the stove itself. We were taken into a high-ceilinged room lined with boards that looked like the inside of a wooden box. It was lighted by a small, double-sashed window, and its sole ornament was an image of the Blessed Virgin, whose aureole and garments were of stamped metal with a place cut out for the head and hands, with brown carnations, that the Russians have imitated from the Byzantine school, and which give a century-old appearance to quite recent paintings. The child Jesus was treated in the same style, and a lamp was burning before the sacred image. These mysterious, swarthy figures, glimpses of which are but caught through a shell of gold or silver, are full of a fascination all their own, and command more veneration than paintings of more artistic merit.

There is no cottage so poor that it does not possess one of these images, before which no one ever passes without uncovering, and which are the object of frequent adorations.

The mild temperature of a hothouse reigned in this room, which was furnished with a table and

several stools. We freed ourselves from our cloaks and the heavy garments that were so oppressive, and breakfasted on provisions brought from Moscow, that were washed down by caravan tea, made in the samovar of the inn. After which, resuming our weighty armor against the arrows of winter, we ensconced ourselves in our kibitka, ready to brave with gaiety the rigors of the cold.

As we approach Troitza, the habitations grow more numerous and we felt we were nearing a place of importance. Troitza is in fact the goal of long pilgrimages. People come here from every province of the Empire, for St. Sergius, the founder of this celebrated convent, is one of the most venerated saints of the Greek calendar. The road leading from Moscow to Troitza, which we had taken, leads to Yaroslav, and in the summer it presents a scene of life and animation. One passes by Ostankina, where there is a Tartar camp, by the village of Rostopkine, by Alexievskoi, where a short time ago were the ruins of the castle of the Tzar Alexis, and when winter has not covered it with its snowy mantle charming country houses can be seen dotting the landscape. The pilgrims, arrayed in their armiaks and shoes of linden bark, when they are not barefooted from devotion, follow the sandy road in short day journeys. Families travel in kibitkas, carrying with them their mattresses, pillows, cooking utensils and the indispensable samovar, like tribes on a journey; but at the

season of our excursion the road was absolutely solitary.

Just before reaching Troitza, the land slopes downward a little, hollowed out doubtless by a water course, frozen and snow-covered in winter. On the edge of the ravine on a large plateau, rises in picturesque beauty the convent of St. Sergius, looking more like a fortress than a house of religion.

It forms an immense quadrilateral, surrounded with solid ramparts, on whose top is built a covered gallery, pierced with barbicans, for the protection of the defenders of the place; and indeed this convent has suffered assault more than once. Great towers, some square, others hexagonal, are built at each corner and at various places in the walls. Some of these towers have on their summits a covered way for defense that projects far out and supports queerly shaped roofs surmounted by lanterns terminating in spires.

There are others, that have a second tower behind the first one, in the midst of a balustrade of bell-towers. The door giving access to the interior of the convent opens in a square tower, before which stretches a great square.

Above these ramparts, rise in graceful picturesque irregularity the pinnacle and cupolas of the buildings forming the monastery. The immense refectory, whose square walls are painted in squares with diamond points, engrosses the attention by its

imposing appearance, lightened by the tower of an exquisite chapel. Quite near it rise the five swelling domes of the church of the Assumption, surmounted by the Greek cross, while a little further on, dominating the landscape, rises the lofty, many-colored tower of the Trinity, with its rows of little towers, carrying high aloft into the heavens its cross adorned with chains. Still other towers, other belfries, and other roofs, emerge in confusion above the level of the walls, but no description could assign them their proper place; they must be seen to be understood. Nothing could be more charming than these gold spires and cupolas, to which the snow adds a few touches of silver, flashing upwards from a cluster of buildings painted in vivid colors. It makes one fancy oneself in an Oriental city.

On the opposite side of the square is a vast hotel, more like a caravansary than an inn, for the reception of pilgrims and travelers. There we put up our carriage and chose our rooms and ordered our dinner, before going to visit the convent. It was not quite equal to the Grand Hotel or the Hotel Meurice, but, all things considered, it did very well for the place; a springlike temperature reigned all through the building, and the larder was very tolerably filled. The complaints of tourists over the dirt and vermin of Russian hotels fill us with amazement.

Near the convent door were established some

stalls, containing various little articles and curiosities that tourists love to carry away as souvenirs. There were children's playthings, of most primitive simplicity, colored with amusing barbarism, little white felt shoes, lined with blue or pink, which even Andalusian feet would find difficult to put on, fur mittens, Circassian belts, dishes from Toula, inlaid with platinum, models of the cracked bell of Moscow, chaplets, enamelled medallions with the picture of St. Sergius, metal or wooden crosses, containing a multitude of microscopic figures, in Byzantine fashion, intermingled with legends in Slavonic characters, rolls from the convent bakery, with scenes from the Old and New Testament stamped on their smooth brown crusts, without counting the piles of green apples that the Russians are never weary of consuming. Moujiks, blue with cold, were keeping these little shops; for here women, without being coerced into Oriental seclusion, never mingle in the outside life; they are rarely seen on the streets; trade is conducted by men, and a female trader is an unknown type in Russia. This retirement is a remnant from the old Asiatic modesty. Several episodes from the life of St. Sergius, who is the great local saint, are painted on the entrance tower. In common with St. Roche and St. Anthony, St. Sergius has his favorite animal. It is neither a dog nor a pig, but a bear, an eminently suitable wild beast to figure in the legend of a Russian saint. While the

venerable saint was living in solitude, a bear wandered around his hermitage with very evident hostile intention. One morning upon opening his door, the saint found a bear standing there growling, with paws extended for a hug that was by no means fraternal. Sergius raised his hand and blessed the animal, who fell on his fore paws, licked the feet of the saint and followed him about with the docility of the most obedient dog. The saint and the bear kept house together ever afterwards with the most perfect amity.

After having looked hastily at these paintings, which if not ancient are at least modelled upon an antique pattern and look very Byzantine, we entered the interior of the convent, which resembles the inside of a fortified place, which indeed it is, for Troitza has passed through several sieges.

A few words in regard to its history will perhaps not be amiss, before passing to the description of the monuments and treasures inclosed within its ramparts. St. Sergius used to live in a cabin in the heart of a vast forest, in the dependency of Radonege, to-day Gorodok, in the practice of prayer, fasting, and all the austerities of a hermit's life. Near his cell he erected a church to the honor of the very Holy Trinity, creating thus a religious centre to which the faithful flocked. His disciples, full of fervor, desired to remain near their master. Sergius, for their protection, built a convent, that took the name of Troitza, which means Trinity in

Russian, after the appellation of the church, and was elected its superior. This happened in 1338.

His care for his salvation and his preoccupation in heavenly matters did not prevent St. Sergius from interesting himself in the events of his time. The love of God did not extinguish in his heart the love of his native land. He was a patriotic saint, and as such he is still the object of great veneration among the Russians. He it was who, in the time of the great Mongolian invasion, incited Prince Dmitri to march in the valley of the Don against the fierce hordes of Mimai. In order that to patriotic exaltation should be added religious exaltation, two monks chosen by Sergius accompanied the prince into battle. The enemy was beaten back, and the grateful Dmitri endowed the convent of Troitza with great wealth, an example that was followed by succeeding princes and Tzars, among others Ivan the Terrible, who was one of the most munificent protectors of the monastery.

In 1395 the Tartars attacked Moscow, laying the country waste with fire and sword in true Asiatic manner. Troitza was too rich a prize not to excite their covetousness. The convent was attacked, pillaged, burned, reduced to a heap of ruins, and when Nikon, the devastating torrent having passed, returned to rebuild the monastery and gather together the scattered monks, the body of St. Sergius was found under the ruins, in a miraculous state of preservation.

Troitza, in time of invasion or distress, served as an asylum for patriotism and a citadel for the nation. In 1609 the Russians defended it for sixteen months against the Poles, under the leadership of the hetman Sapiéha. After several futile assaults, the enemy was forced to raise the siege. Later the convent of St. Sergius sheltered the youthful Tzar, Peter Alexeiovitch, flying from the revolted Strelitz, and the gratitude of this illustrious fugitive, when in power, enriched Troitza, converting it into a very tabernacle of treasures. Troitza has not been pillaged since the sixteenth century, and the convent would have offered a splendid spoil to the French army had it penetrated so far, and the burning of Moscow had not forced its retreat. Tzars, princes, boyards, through the love of display or the desire of obtaining pardon from heaven, have endowed Troitza with incalculable riches, which it still possesses. The infidel Potemkin, who was not on that account less devoted to St. Sergius, presented sumptuous sacerdotal vestments. Besides these heaps of jewels, Troitza owned one hundred thousand serfs and immense domains, that were secularized by Catherine II., after having recompensed the convent by rich presents. Formerly Troitza used to have in its cells about three hundred monks; to-day there are not more than one hundred, who seem well-nigh lost in the vast solitude of this immense convent.

Troitza, which is almost a city, encloses within its walls nine cathedrals, the Tzar's palace, the home of the archimandrite, the chapter hall, the refectory, the library, the treasure-chambers, monks' cells, burial chapels, buildings for service of all sorts, in which there has been no thought of symmetry, but which have been constructed at the desired moment, in the needed spot, like plants growing in a corner of favorable earth. Its appearance is strange, novel, unnatural so to speak. Nothing could bear less resemblance to the picturesque charm of a Catholic convent. The sadness of Gothic art, with its slender columns, its sharp ogivés, its carved trefoils, rising heavenward, evokes an utterly different train of ideas.

Here are no long cloisters enclosing a solitary garden within their time-worn arches, no austere, old, moss-grown, rain-worn walls, covered with the smoke and rust of the centuries; none of those buildings that vary the original theme in a thousand delicious shapes and fancies.

The Greek religion, less picturesque from an artistic point of view, preserves the ancient Byzantine formulas and repeats them unceasingly, being more interested in orthodoxy than in taste. Notwithstanding which it attains immense effects in splendor and richness, while its ecclesiastic barbarism produces a powerful impression upon untutored imaginations.

It is impossible for the most *blasé* tourist not to

experience a sentiment of admiration when, on coming out on the porch of the tower, he sees, at the end of an alley of trees glistening with ice, those churches painted in bright blue, or red, or apple-green, picked out in white by the snow, rising with their gold or silver cupolas from the midst of the vari-colored buildings surrounding them.

The day was drawing to a close as we entered the cathedral of the Trinity, where is the shrine of St. Sergius, and the tender light gave additional significance to the splendor of the sanctuary. The long files of saints against the walls made dark spots on the gold backgrounds and assumed a sort of strange, stern life. They might have been taken for a procession of grave personages standing out among the shadows, on the top of a little hill, across which gleams a ray of the setting sun. In other more obscure corners the pictured figures resembled phantoms, watching eagerly all that was passing in the church. Caught by some wandering gleam, an aureole here and there shone like a star in a dark sky, or imparted to some bearded saint the aspect of the head of John the Baptist before Herod. The iconostase, a gigantic façade of gold and jewels, reached to the ceiling with its yellow flashes and prismatic scintillations. Close to the iconostase, on the right, a luminous spot attracted the attention, where countless lamps were shining amid a blaze of gold, enamel and silver. It was the shrine of St. Sergius, the humble an-

chorite, who rests there within a monument richer than that of an emperor. The tomb is of silver-gilt, the canopy in massive silver, supported by four columns of the same metal, the gift of the Tzarina Anne.

Around this brilliant, flashing mass of wrought gold and silver, moujiks, pilgrims, devotees of every sort, were praying in an ecstasy of devotion, making the sign of the cross, absorbed in the practices of Greek piety. It made a picture worthy of Rembrandt. The glittering tomb threw over the kneeling peasants flashes of flame, that touched with glory a head or a beard, or brought into prominence a profile, while the rest of the body was lost in shadow and coarse heavy garments. There were magnificent heads among them, glorified with faith and enthusiasm.

After having contemplated for some time this scene so full of interest, we examined the iconostase, in which is enshrined the picture of St. Sergius, which is considered miraculous, and which was carried by the Tzar Alexis during his wars against Poland, and by Peter the Great in his campaigns against Charles XII. It is difficult to conceive of the quantity of riches that faith, devotion, or remorse, hoping to secure thus the indulgence of heaven, have accumulated in centuries on this iconostase, a colossal jewel-casket, a veritable mine of precious stones. The nimbi of certain pictures are strewn with diamonds. Sapphires, rubies, emer-

alds, topazes form patterns on the golden robes of the madonnas, black and white pearls are arranged in flowers, and when room is lacking, careanets of massive gold fastened at each corner serve to contain diamonds of enormous size. It is almost impossible to compute their value, but it is surely many millions. Without doubt a simple madonna of Raphael is much more beautiful than a Greek Mother of God thus decked out, but still this prodigious Asiatic and Byzantine magnificence produces its own effect.

The cathedral of the Assumption, which is next to that of the Trinity, is built on the same plan as that of the Assumption of the Kremlin, whose interior and exterior arrangements are exactly repeated. Paintings that one could easily fancy were executed by the immediate pupils of Panselinos, the great Byzantine artist of the eleventh century, cover its walls and the enormous pillars that support the ceiling. One could fancy that the church was entirely decorated with tapestry, for no relief breaks the immense fresco which is divided into compartments and circles. Sculpture plays no part in the adornment of religious edifices consecrated to the Greek worship. The Eastern church, which employs in such profusion the painted image, apparently does not admit the sculptured one. She seems to fear the statue as an idol, although she occasionally makes use of the bas-relief in the decoration of doors, crosses and

other religious articles. We know of no other detached statues than those which decorate the cathedral of St. Isaac's.

This total absence of relief and sculpture imparts to the Greek churches a strange and singular style, of which at first one does not take account, but finally learns to understand.

In this church are the tombs of Boris Godunoff, his wife and two children. They resemble in style and form Mussulman graves. Religious scruples banish the art that makes of Gothic tombs such admirable monuments.

St. Sergius, as the founder and patron of the convent, certainly deserved to have his church built on the spot where formerly stood his hermit cell. There is then within the walls of Troitza a chapel to St. Sergius as richly ornamented, as splendid as the sanctuaries, of which we have been talking. There is found the miraculous image of the Virgin of Smolensk, surnamed the Leader. The walls, from top to bottom, are covered with frescoes, while through the interstices of the goldwork of the iconostase glimpses may be caught of the brown heads of Greek saints.

In the meanwhile it had grown dark, and whatever may be the zeal of the tourist, it is sometimes possible to see without understanding. Hunger, too, began to assert its claims, so we returned to the inn, where the delightful temperature of a Russian interior greeted us. The dinner was passable.

The inevitable cabbage soup, accompanied with meat-balls, a milk-pig, soudaks, a fish peculiar to Russia, composed the menu, enlivened with a little white Crimean wine, which amuses itself by counterfeiting champagne, and is not, when all is said and done, at all disagreeable. After dinner, several glasses of tea and a few puffs of extremely strong Russian tobacco, from little pipes like those used by the Chinese, brought us to the hour of retiring.

Our repose was not troubled by any of those nocturnal aggressors whose impure onslaught transforms the traveler's bed into a bloody field of battle. So we are deprived of the opportunity of hurling a pathetic malediction against vermin, and must reserve for another occasion Heinrich Heine's quotation: "A duel with a bug! fie! you kill it and it poisons you!" One needs but to leave one's window open in a temperature some thirty degrees below zero to destroy this foul breed.

We were up betimes the next morning, eager to resume our investigations through the convent of Troitza. We managed to visit all the churches we had not seen the day before, of which it is useless to give a detailed description, for inside they are almost an exact repetition of each other, like a liturgical formula. On the outside some unite the rococo style with the Byzantine in a most extraordinary manner. Then, too, it is difficult to assign to these edifices their true age; the one that

seems the most ancient may have been painted the day before, while the traces of time disappear under the incessant application of coats of color. We had brought a letter from an influential person in Moscow for the archimandrite, who was a handsome man with long beard and hair, and a most majestic face, whose features made us think of the Ninevite bulls with human faces. The archimandrite did not speak French, but sending for a nun who understood that language he bade her accompany us in a visit to the Treasury and other curiosities of the convent. The nun kissed the hand of her superior and stood in silence awaiting the arrival of the custodian with the keys. Hers was one of those faces that never fade from the memory, but stand out like a dream from among the trivialities of life. On her head she wore a sort of bushel, resembling the diadem of certain Mithraic divinities, that is used by popes and monks. Two long crape streamers with floating ends fell over a full black robe. Her face, which had the pallor of the ascetic, with yellow tints under the fine skin, was perfect in its regularity. Her eyes, which were surrounded by black circles, when she raised the lids were of deepest blue, and her entire person, although enveloped and concealed in this floating bag of black etamine, betrayed the rarest distinction. She managed its folds through the long corridors of the convent as she might have handled a long train in some court ceremonial. The

nameless graces of a former woman of the world, which she essayed to conceal with Christian humility, reappeared in spite of her. At sight of her, the most prosaic imagination could not help weaving a romance around her. What grief, what despair, what whirlwind of passion, could have brought her here? She made us think of the Duchesse de Langeais, in Balzac's "History of the Thirteen," discovered by Montriveau under the habit of a Carmelite nun in the depths of an Andalusian convent. We arrived at the treasure room, where we were shown, as the most precious piece, a wooden goblet and some coarse priestly garments. The sister explained that this wretched wooden vase was the *pix* used by St. Sergius in his service of the mass, and that he had worn these miserable vestments, which made them priceless reliques. She spoke the purest French, without the slightest accent, as if it had been her mother tongue. While with the utmost calmness, quite free from skepticism or credulity, she told of the various marvelous legends relating to these objects, a slight smile parting her lips, and showing teeth of a purer tint than all the pearls of the treasure-room, teeth so shining as to leave an imperishable impression, like the teeth of Berenice in Edgar Poe's romance.

These brilliant teeth, in this face marked with suffering and austerity, brought back her youth. This nun, whom at first we had thought thirty-six or eight, did not seem now more than twenty-five.

But it was but for an instant. Having become aware, with a woman's delicacy of perception, of our respectful but eager admiration, she resumed the dead air suitable to her habit. All the wardrobes were opened to our inspection, and we beheld bibles, gospels, books of liturgy, with enamelled covers incrustated with onyx, sardonyx, agate chrysoberyl, aquamarines, lapis-lazuli, malachite, turquoise, with gold and silver clasps, and antique cameos set in the backs; golden pixes, encircled with diamonds, crosses inset with emeralds and rubies, rings with sapphire bezels, silver vases and chandeliers, brocaded dalmatics embroidered with flowers in precious stones, and legends written in ancient Slavonic in pearls, censers in cloisonné enamel, triptychs covered with countless figures, images of madonnas and saints, perfect masses of goldwork, starred with jewels—the treasures of Haroun-al-Raschid Christianized.

As we were leaving, dazzled with wonders, our eyes blinded and full of blue lights, the nun pointed to a shelf of a wardrobe, on which were several bushels that had escaped our attention, whose appearance presented nothing unusual. She plunged into one her slender, patrician hand, saying: “They are pearls. They did not know what to do with them, so have put them here. There are eight measures full.”

BYZANTINE ART.



## XIX.

### BYZANTINE ART.

UNDERSTANDING from some of our observations that we were not utterly ignorant of art, the nun who had shown us the treasures thought that a sight of the *ateliers de peinture* of the convent, the workshops where the pictures are made, might interest us as much as these heaps of gold, diamonds and pearls, so she took us through broad corridors, intersected with staircases, to the rooms where the artist-monks and their pupils were at work.

Byzantine art is very peculiar, being a law unto itself, and entirely different from what is meant by the word among the nations of Western Europe or those who follow the Latin religion. It is a priestly, hieratic, immutable art; nothing, or well-nigh nothing, is allowed to the fancy or invention of the artist. Its formulas are as absolute as dogmas. So that for this school there exists neither progress, nor decadence nor a high-water mark, if one might be allowed the term. The fresco picture finished twenty years ago cannot be distinguished from the painting counting centuries of existence. As it was in the sixth, the ninth or the tenth cen-

ture such is the Byzantine art of to-day. We make use of this word for lack of a better one, just as everyone uses and understands the word "Gothic," although its meaning is far from being exact.

It is very evident to any man who knows anything at all about painting that this art is derived from a different source than is Latin art, that it has taken absolutely nothing from the Italian schools, that for it the Renaissance has never existed, and that Rome is not the centre where sits enthroned its ideal. This art sees for itself, neither borrows nor advances, since from its inception it found its necessary form; open to criticism, it is true, from an artistic point of view, but wonderfully suited to the function that it fills. But, some one asks, where is the home of this so carefully preserved tradition, whence comes this uniform teaching which has traversed the ages, without undergoing any alteration amid its varied conditions? What masters do all these artists obey, whose pencils have covered the churches of the Greek religion with such a vast multitude of figures, that their enumeration, were it possible, would far surpass that of the most formidable army?

A curious and learned introduction, by M. Didron, placed at the head of the Byzantine manuscript "The Guide to Painting," translated by Dr. Paul Durand, replies to most of these and similar questions. The author of "The Guide to

Painting'' is one Denys, a monk of Fournad'Agrapha, an ardent admirer of the famous Manuel Panselinos of Thessalonica, who is apparently the Raphael of Byzantine art, a few of whose frescoes still exist in the principal church of Kares, on Mt. Athos. In a short preface, preceded by an invocation "to Mary, Mother of God and Ever Virgin," Master Denys of Agrapha thus announces the purpose of his book: "This art of painting, which from infancy has cost me so much labor to learn, at Thessalonica, I have wished to propagate for the use of those who equally desire to give themselves up to its pursuit, and in this work to explain to them with absolute precision all the measurements, the characteristics of the figures, and the colors of the flesh and ornaments. Besides which I desire to explain the proper proportions of natural objects, the work peculiar to each subject, the various preparations of varnish, of glue, of plaster and of gold, as well as the manner of painting upon walls with the greatest perfection. I have also pointed out in their proper succession all the characters of the Old and New Testament, the manner in which should be represented, natural events, and the miracles of the Bible, as well as the parables of our Lord, the legends, and epigraphs suitable for each prophet; the name and character of face of the apostles and principal saints, their martyrdom and a portion of their miracles according to their order in the calendar.

I tell how churches should be painted and I give much other information, necessary to the art of painting, as can be seen in the table. I have gathered all these materials together with care and pains, assisted by my pupil, Cyril of Chios, who has corrected the whole with infinite solicitude. Pray then for us, every one please, that the Lord may deliver us from the fear of being condemned as unprofitable servants.”

This manuscript, a veritable manual of Christian iconography and pictorial technique, dates, according to the monks of Mt. Athos, back to the tenth century. It is not so old, probably not going beyond the fifteenth century, but that is a matter of very little importance, for it assuredly repeats the ancient formulas and archaic procedures. It still serves to-day as a guide, and as M. Didron tells in his journey to the sacred mountain, where he paid a visit to Father Macarios, the best Aghiorite painter, after Father Joasaph, “This bible of his art was spread open in the middle of his studio and two of his youngest pupils were reading aloud from it alternately while the others painted as they listened to the reading.”

The traveler endeavored to buy this manuscript, but the artist refused to part with it at any price, for without this book he could not have continued to paint, but he would allow a copy of it to be made. This manuscript contained the secret of Byzantine painting, and enabled the learned tourist, who

had just visited the churches of Athens, Salamis, Triccala, Kalabach, Larissa, the convents of Meteores, of St. Barlaam, St. Sophia, Salonica, Mistra, Argos, to understand why he found everywhere the same profusion of painted decoration, everywhere the same arrangement, costume, and even the same attitude of the sacred personages. "One might fancy," he exclaimed in astonishment, "that a single thought, animating at the same time a hundred pencils, had brought into being, at a single stroke, all the paintings of Greece!"

This exclamation can be applied with quite as much justice to all the frescoes that adorn most of the Russian churches.

"The work-shop in which these paintings are prepared," continues the traveler, "and in which most of the Byzantine artists are trained, is Mt. Athos; it is indeed the Italy of the Eastern Church. Mt. Athos, that province of monks, contains twenty great monasteries, which are in reality so many little towns, ten villages, two hundred and fifty isolated cells, and one hundred and fifty hermitages. The smallest of these monasteries encloses six churches or chapels, and the largest thirty-three; two hundred and eighty-eight in all.

"The villages or skites possess two hundred and twenty-five chapels and ten churches. Each cell has its chapel and each hermitage its oratory. At Kares, the capital of Athos, is what might be called the cathedral of the entire mountain, which the

Greek monks call the Protaton, the metropolis. On the top of a mountain on the eastern end of the peninsula, rises in solitary grandeur a church dedicated to the Transfiguration. On Mt. Athos alone are nine hundred and thirty-five churches, chapels or oratories, and nearly all are frescoed and filled with paintings done on wood. In the great convents, the most of the refectories are equally covered with mural paintings.”

All this certainly constitutes a rich museum of religious art. The pupil-painter does not lack subjects for study, nor models to reproduce, for the merit of the artist does not consist in the Byzantine school, as it does in the others, in inventing, in imagining, in showing himself original, but rather in recopying in the most faithful manner possible the consecrated types. The contours and proportions of the figures are all decided in advance. Nature is never consulted, tradition indicates the color of hair and beard, whether they shall be long or short, the color of the vestments, the number, direction, and thickness of their folds. For long-robed saints there is invariably an opening of the garment about the knee. “In Greece,” says M. Didron, “the artist is the slave of the theologian. His work, which his successors will copy, copies those of the painters who have preceded him. The Greek artist is as fettered with traditions as the animal with his instincts. He makes a figure as the swallow her nest, or the bee

its honey-comb. The execution alone is his; for the invention and the conception belong to the Fathers, to the theologians, to the orthodox Church. Neither time nor place count for anything in Greek art; in the eighteenth century, the Moreotic painter continues to copy the Venetian painter of the tenth, or the Athonite painter of the fifth and sixth. In the church of the Transfiguration at Athens, in the Hecatumpyli at Mistra, or the Panagia of St. Luke, you find the St. John Chrysostom of the baptistery of St. Mark, in Venice, is but reproduced.”

M. Didron had the happiness to meet at Mt. Athos, in the convent of Esphigmenon, the first he visited, monk Joasaph, a painter of Kares, who was covering with mural paintings the portico outside of the nave of the church. He was assisted in his labors by his brother and two pupils, of whom one was a deacon, and two apprentices. The subject which he was drawing on the still fresh coating of plaster on the wall was Christ giving to his apostles the mission of evangelizing and baptizing the world,—an important subject containing twelve figures nearly life size. He sketched in the figures without hesitation, with an unerring pencil, with only his memory to furnish the models. While he was thus employed, his pupils filled in with the requisite coloring the contours of the figures and draperies, gilded the nimbus around their heads, or wrote the letters of the legends, dictated

by the master, as he continued his work. The young apprentices pounded and mixed the colors. These frescoes, we are assured by the traveler, although executed with so sure a celerity, were better than the paintings of our artists of the second or third class in religious work; and as he expressed his amazement at the talent and learning of Father Joasaph, who found for each personage such appropriate legends, giving proof of such vast erudition, the monk replied with humility that it was not so difficult as might be imagined, and that with the aid of the "Guide and a little practice, anyone could do quite as well."

We had seen, some time before, a charming little picture by Papety in the Salon in Paris, representing "Greek monks painting the walls of a chapel of the convent of Iviron, on Mt. Athos."

We had not at that time been in Russia, but already this Neo-Byzantine art, of which we had then seen but a few isolated fragments, fascinated us, and Papety's picture, outside its artistic merit, excited our curiosity and filled us with delight, as we beheld the work of living artists, that seemed to date back to the time of the Greek emperors, and we had described them as follows:

"There stood the two Greek monks, against the wall they were painting. The lineaments of the saints stand out in red lines traced upon the fresh plaster awaiting their completion. The drawings possessed an archaic stiffness that could make one

believe they belonged to some distant epoch." Now we, too, like Papety and Didron, were about to see the work of the monk-artists, like those of Mt. Athos, following with devotion the teachings of the Guide, a living school of Byzantines, the past working with the hands of the present, certainly a rare and curious thing.

Five or six monks, of various ages, were busily engaged in painting the bare walls of a huge well-lighted room. One of the number, a handsome man with black beard and swarthy face, who was finishing a Mother of God, especially struck us, with his air of priestly gravity, as well as the pious care he bestowed upon his work. He brought to mind Ziegler's beautiful painting: "St. Luke drawing the portrait of the Virgin." With him religious sentiment plainly took the precedence of art: he painted as he might have celebrated the holy office. His Virgin might well have been put on the easel of the apostle, so severely archaic was it, and so absolutely within the rigid, sacramental lineaments. It might have been a Byzantine empress, as it gazed at you with a grave majesty, from the depths of its great, fixed, black eyes. The portions to be covered by the silver or gold plating, that would have the places for the head and the hands cut out, were as carefully painted as if they were to remain in sight.

Other painting, in various stages of advancement, representing Greek saints, among the rest St. Ser-

gius, the patron of the convent, were being finished under the painstaking hands of the artist-monks. These pictures, destined to serve as icons in chapels or private houses, were on panels covered with gypsum and smoked a little after the manner recommended by Master Denys of Agrapha, so that they were exactly like the paintings of the twelfth or fifteenth century. There were the same stiff, constrained attitudes, the same priestly gestures, the same regularity of folds, the same tawny, brown color of skin, all the rules of Mt. Athos. They were employing the white of an egg, or distemper, that was afterwards varnished. The aureoles and ornaments meant to be gilded stood out in relief, that they might reflect the light to better advantage. The old masters of Salonica, could they have revisited the world, would have been absolutely content with these pupils of Troitza.

But no tradition can be to-day inviolably maintained. Less strictly conscientious followers will slip now and then in among the obstinate sectarians of the old formulas, and through some opening the new spirit will be introduced into the ancient mould. Even those who desire to follow the footsteps of the Athonite painters, and preserve in our time inviolably the Byzantine style, cannot help seeing modern pictures where liberty of invention is allied to the study of nature. It is impossible to keep one's eyes always closed, and even at Troitza the modern spirit had penetrated.

In the metopes of the Parthenon there are two distinct styles, the one archaic, the other modern. A portion of the monks adhered to the ancient rule; others, younger ones, had abandoned the white of egg for oil, and, though still keeping their figures in the prescribed attitude and immemorial postures, allowed themselves to give truer tones to the heads and hands, to use a less conventional coloring, and to remodel the plans and improve the reliefs. They made the sacred women humanly pretty, and the men less theocratically fierce; they failed to apply to the chins of the patriarchs and hermits the forked beard, recommended by "The Guide to Painting." Their figures were more like a picture, without having, in our opinion, the merit of one.

This more suave and agreeable method does not lack partisans, as examples in more than one modern Russian church will attest; but, for our part, we vastly prefer the ancient method, that is, the religious and decorative ideal, with a prestige in form and coloring beyond the vulgar reality. This symbolic fashion of presenting an idea by means of figures already decided, like the sacred writing in which it is not permissible to alter the letters, seems to us wonderfully suitable to the adornment of the sanctuary. For in spite of its fixity it would still allow a great artist an opportunity of asserting himself in the beauty of the drawing, the grandeur of style and nobility of contour.

We do not believe that this attempt to modernize Byzantine art will be successful. There is in Russia, as in France, a school of romantic *littérateurs* who passionately love local coloring, and who defend with learned theories and lucid criticism the old style of Mt. Athos, on account of its antique, religious character, its deep convictions and absolute originality, surrounded as it is by productions of Italian, Spanish, Flemish or French art. A just idea may be formed of this contention by calling to mind the passionate defense of Gothic architecture and the diatribes against Greek architecture, as applied to religious edifices, the parallels drawn between Notre Dame and the church of the Madeleine in Paris, which formed the delight of the cultured in the early half of the century.

At some time or other, every country suffers from what might be called a period of false classic civilization, a sort of learned barbarism, in which it is incapable of understanding its own beauties, despises its individuality, cares nothing for its antiquities and customs, but at sight of some insipid ideal of regularity is willing to demolish its most wonderful national edifices. The eighteenth century, so great in other respects, would willingly have razed to the ground the cathedrals, as monuments of bad taste. The portal of St. Gervais, by de Brosse, was frankly preferred to the stupen-

dous façades of the cathedrals of Strasburg, Chartres and Rheims.

The nun apparently looked upon these freshly-colored madonnas if not precisely with disdain, since they represented a sacred image, worthy of adoration, certainly with a respect entirely void of admiration. She lingered much longer before the easels where were being elaborated paintings according to ancient methods. In spite of our preference for the old style, we must acknowledge that certain amateurs push a little too far to please us their passion for the old Byzantine paintings. In their eagerness for the naïve, the primordial, the sacred, the mystic, they are carried away by enthusiasm for smoked and worm-eaten panels, upon which can scarce be discerned fierce figures, extravagant in design and impossible in coloring. In comparison with these images, the crudest Christs of Cimabue would seem like those of Vanloo and Boucher. It is pretended that some of these paintings date from the fifth, or even fourth century. We can understand that they should be sought for as archaic curiosities, but it is not possible that they should be admired for their artistic merit. Several of them were shown to us, when we were in Russia, but we must confess ourselves incapable of discovering the beauties that so charmed their possessors.

They might perhaps be venerable in a sanctuary as ancient witnesses of the faith they represented,

but certainly their place is not in a gallery, unless indeed it may be an historical one.

Outside of this Byzantine art, whose home is Mt. Athos, there has not yet existed any school of Russian art, properly speaking. The few artists that Russia has produced have not created a school; they have studied in Italy, and their paintings are not especially national. The most celebrated and best known of them all in Western Europe is Bruloff, whose vast canvas entitled "The Last Day of Pompeii" made a great sensation in the Salon of 1824. Bruloff painted the cupola of St. Isaac's, where he evinced a superb comprehension of composition and perspective, in a manner that recalled decorative painting as it was practiced towards the close of the eighteenth century. This artist, who had a pale, romantic, Byronian face surrounded by a mass of blonde hair, delighted in reproducing his own head, and we have seen a number of his portraits executed at various times by his own hand, which, no matter what was his age, portrayed his extraordinary beauty. These portraits, done with dash and freedom, seem to us the best of his works. A very popular name in St. Petersburg is that of Ivanoff, in whom, during years employed in the creation of a mysterious *chef-d'œuvre*, Russia waited and hoped for a great painter. But that is another story, and would carry us too far away to be told now. Will, then, Russia never take her place among the schools of painting? We

believe she may do so, when she will cease to indulge in foreign imitation, when her painters, instead of going to Italy for their models, will look around them and seek inspiration from nature and the so varied and characteristic types of that immense empire, that beginning at Prussia only ends at China. Our relations with the group of young artists who assembled in the "Friday Club" allows us to believe in the by no means distant realization of this future.

Always preceded by the nun enveloped in her long black veils, we next entered a perfectly furnished laboratory where Nadar might have worked in comfort. To pass from Mt. Athos to Paris is indeed a rather sudden transition. To leave monks grinding out Panagias on gold backgrounds and to find others applying collodion to pieces of glass is one of the tricks that civilization loves to play at the moment when one is thinking the least about it! The sight of a cannon pointed in our direction could not have surprised us more than did the brass tube of the camera pointed by chance towards us. We could scarcely believe our eyes. The monks of Troitza, the disciples of St. Sergius, were making views of their convent, perfectly successful photographic reproductions. They possess the best instruments, are familiar with the latest methods, and do their work in a chamber lighted with yellow glass, which color possesses the faculty of breaking the luminous rays. We bought from them a

view of the monastery, that we still have and that has not grown too pale.

In his Russian travels, M. de Custine complains that he was not allowed to visit the library of Troitza; but we found no difficulty in this matter, and saw all that is possible for a traveler to see of a library in a half hour—that is, the backs of well-bound books arranged neatly on shelves of the bookcases. Besides the books on theology, the bibles, the works of the Fathers of the Church, scholastic treatises, liturgical books in Latin, Greek, Slavonic, we noticed in a rapid survey numerous French books of the last and also of the great century. We also saw the immense refectory, which is terminated by a delicately wrought screen, through whose iron arabesques gleamed the gold of an iconostase, for the refectory contains a chapel, in order that the soul may be nourished as well as the body. We had completed the tour of the convent, and the nun brought us back to take leave of the archimandrite.

Before entering the apartment, the habits of the woman of the world gaining the ascendancy over the rules of the monastic life, she turned towards us, and bowed, as a queen might have bowed from the steps of her throne, and as she smiled with languid grace she showed those exquisite teeth, that were so much more beautiful than all the pearls of Troitza.

Then with a change as sudden as if she had

lowered her veil, her face resumed the lifeless expression of one who has renounced the world, as with spirit-like tread she knelt before the archimandrite and kissed his hand as reverently as if it had been a relique. After which, she rose, and disappeared like a dream, amid the mysterious depths of the convent, leaving with us an ineffaceable remembrance.

There was nothing more to be seen in Troitza, so we repaired to the hotel and ordered our driver to get his carriage ready. The horses harnessed to the kibitka by a series of cords, the coachman seated on his narrow bench, covered with a sheepskin, we ourselves ensconced comfortably under our bear-skin, the bill paid, the *pour-boires* scattered, nothing remained but to execute the fantasia of a departure at full gallop. A little noise from the moujik's tongue was the signal for our equipage to assume the mad gait of the horse that carried away Mazeppa fastened to his back, and it was only at the other side of the hill upon which Troitza was built, whose domes and towers were still to be seen, that these delightful little beasts consented to fall into a reasonable pace. We will not describe the road from Troitza to Moscow, having already described that from Moscow to Troitza, the only difference being that the objects were presented in inverse ratio.

We reached Moscow that same evening, quite ready to go to a masked ball that was to be given

that night, invitations to which we found at the hotel. In spite of the intense cold, sleighs and carriages with lanterns shining like frozen stars were standing before the door. A warm, joyous light shone through the windows of the building where the ball was taking place, making, with the moonlight, one of those contrasts so sought for by dioramas and stereoscopes. Having crossed the vestibule, we entered an immense, square room, surrounded by columns supporting a gallery that was reached by stairs. We thought this arrangement very charming, and one that it would be well to imitate in halls destined for fêtes, since it allows those who are not participating actively in the pleasures of the ball to watch the dancers, without crowding them, and to enjoy at their ease the scene offered by the animated and moving crowds. From this height the figures assume a much more picturesque and brilliant appearance. Nothing is more tiresome than a mass of people on a level. That is the reason that society balls are so inferior in effect to those of the Opera, with their triple row of *loges*, filled with masks, like garlands, and their troops of peasants, devils, savages and babies ascending and descending the stairs. Although the decorations were of extreme simplicity, they produced an effect of gaiety, elegance and richness. Everything was white: walls, ceilings, pillars, while around the moulding ran a gilded network. The stuccoed and polished pillars imitated

marble to perfection, and reflected the light brilliantly. All along the cornice were rows of candles, that added to the blaze of the chandeliers. Amid such a mass of whiteness, the light attained the vivacity of the most vivid Italian "daylight" illumination.

Certainly movement and light are elements of joy, but in order that a fête should be absolutely successful, noise must be added: noise, the breath and song of life. The crowd, although quite large, was silent; only the lightest murmur ran like a wave from group to group, making a dull, continuous bass accompaniment to the fanfares of the orchestra. Russians take their pleasures silently, and when one has had his ears deafened by the triumphal bacchanal of "the Nights at the Opera" he is astonished at this phlegm and taciturnity. Doubtless they amuse themselves greatly at home, but they certainly do not appear to do so outside.

There were dominos, masks, uniforms, people in evening dress, and a few officers, with wasp-like waists, in Lesghine, Circassian or Tartar costumes, but no typical disguise that could be considered as peculiar to the country. Russia has not yet produced its national disguise. The women, as usual, were in the minority, and were the attraction of the ball. As well as could be judged, what is called the *demi-monde* was represented by French, German and Swedish women, often of rare beauty. It is possible that the Russian element

was not lacking, but it is not easy for a stranger to recognize it. We give this observation for what it is worth. In spite of a few timid attempts at the *cancan*, of Paris importation, the affair rather dragged, and the bursts of music failed to enliven it. The entrance of the Gypsies was awaited with impatience, for a concert was to be given in the middle of the ball. When the Gypsy singers appeared on the stage a sigh of profound satisfaction issued from every breast.

At last, we were going to be amused! The real spectacle was about to begin. The Russians are passionately fond of these Gypsies' songs, that are so full of a strange pathos, and bring to the listener longings for a roving life and primitive nature, beyond constraint of every law, divine or human. We, too, love these songs with a passionate devotion, that taught us to make liberal use of our elbows that we might get close to the stage that held the musicians.

The music began. It consisted of weird songs, full of sweet melancholy or mad gaiety, interspersed with endless trills, like those of a bird who listens to and is intoxicated with his own song, or one who sighs sadly for some brilliant, former existence, with the joyousness of liberty and love, or perchance is indifferent to all, even to lost happiness, so that freedom remains. Then came choruses, interspersed with stampings and cries as accompaniments to those nocturnal meas-

ures danced on the green of the meadows that are called "The Ring of the Fairies," as if Weber, Chopin or Liszt had suddenly become a savage.

Or perchance the theme of the song would be taken from a common tune one had heard thumped on many a piano, but under the magic touch of instrument, of trill and roulade and caprice it seemed no more the same: the originality of the variations made one forget the vulgarity of the *motif*. Paganini's wonderful elaborations of the "Carnival of Venice" afford some idea of these delicate, musical arabesques, like gold, silk, and pearls embroidered on some coarse stuff. One enormous Gypsy, a sort of clown of most ferocious aspect, supported the songs of the women by chords from a great rebec that he held between his legs and played after the fashion of an Oriental musician, while another great fellow capered about on the stage, dancing, and striking his feet together as he thrummed the chords of his guitar or marked the time on the wood of his instrument with the palm of his hand, making queer grimaces and ever and anon giving vent to a sudden wild shriek.

It would be impossible to describe the enthusiasm of the public: they crowded about the stage and applauded wildly; they shouted their admiration and joined in the choruses. These songs, so full of strange mystery, exercised the power of an actual incantation: the listener grows giddy, mad,

and is thrown into a state of mind that is absolutely incomprehensible.

As you listen, you are suddenly filled with a wild longing to disappear forever from civilization, to inhabit the woods for the rest of your life in the company of one of these brown-skinned sorceresses with eyes of flashing fire. In fact, these songs, so full of a magic charm, are the voices of nature itself, noted down and seized on the wing from the depths of solitude. That is why they move so profoundly all those upon whom weighs so heavily the complicated mechanism of human society.

As, still under the charm of this delicious melody, we were sauntering about the ball dreamily, our soul a thousand leagues away, while we were thinking of a fair gitana of Granada who had once sung to us some verses to an air that greatly resembled one we had just heard and we were seeking in a hidden corner of our brain for the words, we felt ourself suddenly seized by the arm, while in that thin, sharp voice affected by all dominos seeking an intrigue these well-known words were whispered in our ear: "I know you." In Paris nothing could have been more natural. Our face has been seen long enough at first representations, on the boulevards, in the museums, to be as well known as if we were celebrated. But in Moscow at a *bal masqué*, this announcement seemed to our modesty rather a hazardous one.

The domino, however, by way of proving her

assertion, whispered our name from under her mask, which she pronounced very distinctly, with a pretty little Russian accent, that the attempt to disguise her voice had not succeeded in obliterating. The conversation continued, and soon proved that if the Moscow domino had never met us before this ball she was at least perfectly acquainted with our works. It is difficult for an author, when verses from his poetry or lines from his prose are quoted to him so far away from home, not to inhale with pleasure a little of the fragrance of this incense, the most delicate that can be offered to a writer. In order to reduce our *amour-propre* within its proper limits, we were obliged to say deprecatingly that the least of French authors could command a more numerous public in St. Petersburg or Moscow than in Paris itself. At the same time, in order to make a suitable return for the courtesy, we made a brave effort to be gallant and to reply to the quotations by suitable verses, a rather difficult matter, with a domino hopelessly enveloped in a satin bag with a hood drawn over the forehead and a mask with a beard as long as the beard of a hermit. The only thing that could be seen was a slight, little hand, carefully gloved in black. It was entirely too much mystery, and required too much effort of imagination in order to be agreeable. Then, too, we must plead guilty to a fault that always offers an insurmountable bar to our throwing ourselves with

eagerness into the adventures of a *bal masqué*. We are fancying more ugliness than beauty behind the disguise. This abominable piece of black silk, with its profile of a bearded goat and its oblique eyes, seems to be the mould of the face it covers, nor are we at all able to rid ourselves of the impression.

When masked, even women whose youth and beauty are well known to us fall all at once under suspicion. Of course we mean the absolute masked disguise. That tiny scrap of black velvet that our grandfathers used to call *touret de nez* and that the great ladies delighted to wear out walking, allowed a glimpse of the mouth with its pearly smile, the delicate outline of cheek and chin, while its intense black added by force of contrast a new freshness to the pink skin. It allowed one to judge of a woman's beauty, without entirely disclosing it. It was but a coquettish reticence, and not a disturbing mystery. The most one risked could be but a Roxelane nose instead of the Greek one of which one had dreamed, and that is an unhappiness that is easily consoled. But an absolute domino is capable, when it is discarded at the hour of unmasking, of bringing about unfortunate discoveries that may place a well-bred man in a most embarrassing position.

And so it was that, after two or three turns around the ballroom, we left the mysterious lady with a group that she pointed out, and thus ter-

minated our intrigue of the *bal masqué* in Moscow.

What! is that all! the reader is exclaiming. You are hiding something from us. The domino, slipping secretly from the ball, must have indicated to you a mysterious carriage and motioned to you to enter. Then the lady knotted her lace handkerchief around your forehead, declaring playfully that love should be bandaged, and taking you by the hand when the carriage stopped conducted you through long passages, and when the use of your eyes was restored to you, you found yourself in a splendidly illumined boudoir. The lady had laid aside her mask and domino, as the brilliant butterfly casts off its common larva; she was smiling at you, full of delight at your amazement. Tell us whether she was dark or blonde, whether she had a tiny mark at the corner of her mouth, so we may recognize her should we meet her in the world of society. Let us hope that you maintained the honor of France in a foreign land, and showed yourself tender, gallant, witty, paradoxical, impassioned, in a word, worthy of the situation,—an adventure at a masked ball in Moscow!—a charming title for a little story, of which you did not take advantage, you who are always so prolix when it is a question of describing walls, pictures or landscapes! At the risk of being taken for a superannuated Don Juan or a Valmont in retreat, there was nothing else to tell. The meeting stopped right there, and after having taken a glass of tea mixed

with wine we sought our sleigh, and in a few minutes were deposited at our hotel in the street of the Old Newspapers.

Indeed the day had been quite full enough: the morning at the convent, the evening at a ball, a nun, a domino, Byzantine painting, and Gypsies: we had indeed earned the right to retire to rest.

When one is traveling, one feels the value of time much more sensibly than in the ordinary course of life. For several weeks, or at most several months, you are in a country to which probably you may never return; a thousand curious things, that you will never see again, claim your attention. There is not a moment to be lost, and the eyes, like the teeth at a railway buffet, where the signal for departure is momentarily expected, dispose of double portions.

Each hour has its occupation. The absence of duties, of annoyances, of visits to be received or returned, the isolation amid strange surroundings, the constant driving about lengthen one's life to an extraordinary degree, and yet, strange as it may seem, the time does not seem short. Three months of traveling is equal in length to a year in one's ordinary home. When one remains quietly at home, the days, each one so like the other, fall into the jaws of oblivion without leaving any trace. But when one visits for the first time a new country, the remembrance of unaccustomed objects, unexpected actions, form objective points, and land-

marks, that lengthen out the time and make one sensible of its extent.

Apelles once said: *Nulla dies sine linea* (No day without its drawing)—in default of the Greek, we quote the Latin. The tourist should arrange this proverb to his own use and say: “No day without some sight-seeing.”

Following, then, this precept, the day after our expedition to Troitza we went to the Kremlin to visit the Museum of Carriages and the Treasure of the Priests.

These ancient, superb carriages form, indeed, a curious and interesting exhibition: coronation-carriages, gala-carriages, traveling and country carriages, post-chaises, sleighs, and vehicles of every sort and kind. Man proceeds as does nature, going always from the complicated to the simple, from the enormous to the proper proportion, from undue pomp to simple elegance. Carriages, like the fauna of primitive times, had their mammoths and mastodons. One stands in astonishment before the monstrous machines on wheels, with their gear entangled with hangings, their great double springs, their levers, their thick bands of leather and massive wheels, their long swan-necks, their seats as high as the fore-castle of a ship, their bodies as large as a room of to-day, their steps like stairs, their outside seats for pages, with platforms for footmen, and imperials, crowned with galleries, carved with allegorical figures and bunches of

feathers. It was a world in itself, and one wonders how such engines could be moved; eight gigantic Mecklenburg horses could scarce accomplish it. But if these carriages are barbarous from the point of view of actual locomotion, from an artistic point they are marvels. Everything is carved, ornamented, elaborated with exquisite taste. On gold backgrounds, charming paintings are spread out, executed by a master-hand, and which, taken from their panels, would figure with honor in any museum. They are masses of little loves, groups of attributes, nosegays of flowers, garlands, emblazonments, caprices of every sort. The mirrors are Venetian, the carpets the richest and softest that Constantinople or Smyrna can furnish, the upholstery would throw Lyons into despair; brocades, velvets, damasks, brocatelles cover the walls and seats with splendor. The carriages of Catherine I. and Catherine II. contain tables for cards and for the toilette, and, a characteristic detail, colored and gilded stoves of Dresden china. The sleighs for gala occasions are made in a hundred odd shapes and decorated with a charming freedom of fancy. But what is the most curious of all is the collection of saddles, for men and women, and the harnesses of every kind.

Most of them are from the East, and have been sent as presents to the Tzars and Tzarinas, by the emperors of Constantinople, the Great Turks or the shahs of Persia. There is a perfect riot of

gold and silver embroidery, on brocaded and velvet stuffs, which are lost among the stars and suns of precious stones. The bits, the cheek-reins, the curbs, are studded with diamonds, and the reins, which are carefully embroidered with threads of gold or colored silks, are incrustated with turquoises, rubies, emeralds and sapphires. At the risk of being dubbed an Asiatic barbarian, we confess, frankly, that this extravagantly magnificent saddlery delights us much more than the modern English saddlery, which is doubtless very fashionable, but is none the less poor in aspect, matter and ornament.

The sight of these immense, superb carriages reveals more of the ancient life of the courts than all the memoirs of Dangeau and other chroniclers of the palace. They give us some conception of those colossal existences to-day impossible of realization, even with absolute power, for the simplicity of modern manners invades even royal abodes. The gala habit, the grand costume of ceremony, are now nothing but disguises, of which one hastens to rid oneself after the fête. Except on the day of his coronation the emperor never uses his crown. He wears, like everybody else, either a military or civilian hat, and when he goes out he does not take a gold carriage drawn by white horses tossing their feathered heads. Formerly all this magnificence was of daily occurrence. They lived as a matter of course amid this magnificence and splendor. The

kings and great ones of the earth had nothing in common with the rest of mankind but death, and passed their lives on this subservient world like beings of another race.

We next went to see the Treasures of the Priests that are kept also in the Kremlin. It is the most prodigious mass of riches that can possibly be imagined. There are arranged in wardrobes whose doors are thrown open, like the leaves of reliquaries, tiaras, mitres, the hats of metropolitans and archimandrites, mosaics of precious stones on brocaded stuffs, dalmatics, copes, stoles, robes of gold and silver cloth, all flowered with embroideries, all storied with legends, done with pearls. When we were at Troitza we thought there could be no more pearls in the world, but that the convent treasury had gathered them all with its bushels. But there are quite as many in the Treasury of the Priests. The countless *ciboires* (cups) of silver, gold, enamel, beaten, carved, encircled with rows of precious jewels, the crosses peopled with myriads of microscopic figures, the rings, croziers and ornaments of fabulous value, the lamps and torches, the books, bound with plates of gold, and starred with onyx, agate, lapis-lazuli, malachite, we beheld behind the glass with all the pleasure and discouragement of the traveler who, where he can write but a few lines, feels the subject is worthy of a monograph that would occupy an entire lifetime.

In the evening we attended the theatre. It is vast and magnificent, and recalls in its principal arrangements the Odeon in Paris and the theatre of Bordeaux. This perfect regularity does not give us the least pleasure, and we would for our part much prefer the least architectural caprice irregular and ornamented, after the fashion of the Vassili Blajennoi, or of the Palace *à facettes*, but that would be less "civilized" and would consequently be treated as barbarous by people of good taste.

But it must be acknowledged that for that style the theatre of Moscow is quite perfect. Everything is grandiose, superb, magnificent. The decoration of the auditorium is red and gold and very pleasing to the eye from its grave opulence. It forms, too, a capital background to the brilliant toilettes of the women, and the imperial *loge*, which is exactly opposite the stage, produces a majestic and splendid effect, with its gilded pillars, its two-headed eagles, its coats of arms, and rich curtains. It stretches through two rows of *loges*, interrupting with happy effect the curved lines of the galleries. As is the case with La Scala, San Carlo and all the great Italian theatres, a passageway encircles the parterre, thus facilitating access to the seats, which is rendered still more easy by an alley in the middle. Nowhere is space parsimoniously saved as with us. Everyone can go in and out without disturbing his neighbor, and can chat with the ladies in the boxes. The armchairs in the orches-

tra are, too, delightfully comfortable; the front rows by common consent are reserved for people of the highest rank and importance. A merchant never goes above the fifth row, and the same courtesy is observed in the *loges*; at least it was so when we were there. But, no matter where your seat may be, you may be sure that you will be absolutely comfortable. The spectator is not sacrificed to the spectacle, as happens but too often in the theatres of Paris, where pleasure is purchased only through torture. Each one is surrounded by the space Stendhal thought necessary to thoroughly enjoy the music without being troubled by the proximity of his neighbor. Owing to that skill in heating that the Russians have carried to the highest degree of perfection, which is indeed with them a question of life and death, an equal and delightful temperature is everywhere maintained, and there is no risk, if one should chance to open the door of his box, of receiving those douches of cold air that are so disagreeable to those in evening dress.

Still, in spite of all this luxury, the theatre in Moscow was not very full this evening. There were great empty spaces among the boxes, while whole rows of chairs were unoccupied or only filled with a few scattered spectators. Nothing short of the most enormous crowds fill those great theatres. In Russia everything is on too grand a scale, as if made for a population yet to come.



The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car and into the cold air of the city was a sense of awe. The streets were wide and empty, the buildings tall and imposing. I had heard that Moscow was a city of contrasts, and indeed it was. The air was thick with a sense of history, and the people I met had a certain air of mystery. I was in a city that had seen so much, and I was only just beginning to understand it.

The first thing I did was to go to the opera house. It was a magnificent building, a masterpiece of architecture. The interior was even more impressive, with its ornate decorations and its grand chandelier. The music was beautiful, the singing was superb. I had never heard anything like it before. It was a truly unforgettable experience.

After the opera, I went to a restaurant. The food was excellent, the service was impeccable. I had heard that the food in Moscow was the best, and I was not disappointed. The restaurant was a fine example of the city's culinary traditions.

I then went to a park. The trees were bare, but the snow was beautiful. I had heard that the parks in Moscow were lovely, and I was not wrong. The park was a peaceful place, a place where I could relax and enjoy the beauty of the city.

As I walked through the park, I thought about the city I was in. Moscow was a city of many faces, a city that had seen so much. It was a city that had a rich history, a city that had a vibrant culture. I was in a city that was truly special, and I was lucky to be there.

**The Opera House, Moscow**

The Opera House in Moscow is a truly magnificent building, a masterpiece of architecture. The interior is even more impressive, with its ornate decorations and its grand chandelier. The music is beautiful, the singing is superb. It is a truly unforgettable experience.





It was the day for the ballet, for the ballet and the opera alternate in Russia, and do not combine as in most countries. We do not remember the story of that evening's ballet. It had all the disconnectedness of the Italian libretto, and was only meant to string together a succession of *pas* that would set off the talents of the dancers. Although we have ourself written programs for the ballet, and understand tolerably well the language of pantomime, we found it impossible to follow the thread of the action, amid the figures for three, or for two or for a single performer together with the evolutions of the *corps de ballet*, which, be it said, maneuvered with skill and elegance. What struck us the most was a kind of mazurka performed by a dancer by the name of Alexandroff, with a dignity, grace and beauty much above the tiresome affectations of the general dancer.

The life of the traveler is made up of contrasts. The following day we paid a visit to the convent of Romanoff, which was several versts distant from Moscow. This convent is celebrated for the excellent religious music which is given there. Like Troitza, it has on the outside all the appearance of a fortress. Its vast walls enclose a number of chapels and buildings, as well as a cemetery, that in winter presented the most dismal appearance. Nothing could be more sad than these crosses buried in the snow, these urns and funeral columns, that broke the outline of their white covering like

a second winding-sheet. One cannot shake off the feeling that these poor dead people lying under this frozen layer must be very cold, and must feel themselves more than usually forgotten, for the snow effaces their names, together with the pious inscriptions, accompanying them, that recommend their souls to the prayers of the living.

After a melancholy glance at these half-covered graves, whose desolation was augmented by some withered blackened leaves that had fallen from the trees above, we entered the church, where we were amazed at the prodigious height of the iconostase, which was much greater than the loftiest Spanish retables.

A service was in progress, and we were astonished to hear sounds analogous to those produced by our organs when the bell-stops are used. We were aware that the Greek church did not allow these instruments.

We soon, however, perceived our error, for on approaching the iconostase we beheld a group of singers with long beards and black garments. Instead of singing out loud, as they do with us, they seek softer effects, and indulge in a sort of humming, whose charm is more easily heard than described. Fancy the noise made, on warm summer nights, by the great night moths: the note is grave, sweet and yet penetrating. There were about a dozen in all, I should fancy, and the basses were distinguished by the manner in which they lifted

up their heads, while the sacred songs issued from their mouths without any perceptible movement of their lips.

In the imperial chapel at St. Petersburg, and in the convent of Romanoff, we heard the best music to which we listened while in the empire. The musical compositions of Western Europe are without doubt more learned and beautiful, but the manner in which the plain-chant is executed in Russia invests it with mysterious grandeur and inexpressible beauty. It is said that St. John Damascene brought about a great reformation of sacred music in the eighth century. It has changed very little since that time, and the chants that we heard were the same ones arranged for four voices by modern composers. At one time the influence of Italian art was felt in this sacred music; it was, however, but momentary, and the emperor Alexander I. would not allow anything but the ancient chant to be used in his chapel. On our return to the hotel, still vibrating in every nerve with celestial harmony, we found letters recalling us to St. Petersburg, and it was with infinite regret that we quitted Moscow, the true Russian city, crowned by the Kremlin with its hundred cupolas.











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