RUSSIA BEHIND THE VEIL—ARE WE UNSYMPATHETIC TO THIS VAST UNFAMILIAR NATION? BY E. M. GRUNWALDT

RUSSIA is to-day closer, in her understanding, to America than America is to Russia. This may be straining toward a paradox, but it is a conclusion which any Russian, who knows his Russia, must reach after a resi-
dence in this country; for America, despite the general focusing of attention upon the Muscovite, appears in Russian eyes to know nothing practically of the real Russia behind the veil.

Russians are popularly, or rather unpopularly, supposed to be an unprogressive, lethargic people, sticking to traditions and dumbly enduring things as they are. Russian peasants are supposed to be scurvily treated in general and to be so hopelessly ignorant as to be incapable of mastering the higher arts and crafts. This is not only a misconception, but it displays a want of fairness all the more surprising in a traditionally unbiased people. Yet what do we find? What do the American classes, to omit the masses, know of Russian art? What of Russian progress and industry? Relatively nothing. Is it believable, for example, that there lives a great artist in a European capital, honored by an entire nation as a supreme master, and yet who is not even known by name to the American or European public? Is it credible that the same city holds a dozen artists who are as tall in genius as the best masters of other lands where their name and fame are as nothing? You shake your head. But what of Ilya Ryepin, who is to painting what Tolstoi is to letters? What, likewise, is known this side the Vistula of Vladimir, Pirogoff, Makofsky, Venig, Shabounin, Dubofsky, Adamson, Von Liphart and others of perhaps equal stature? They are but as shadows, where they have any recognition at all outside of their own country; and yet they only share in the general eclipse, the vast veil that hangs like a curtain between Russia and the outside world.

It is my ambition to lift a brief corner of the veil and exhibit a few phases of Russian art, life and industries other than the tragedies being enacted in a few unhappy districts. The situation is perhaps better illustrated by a grotesque fairy tale current beyond the Vistula. This goblin parable concerns an aged woman named Marfushka who
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jumped at conclusions while looking for the Evil One. She had been
smitten with plagues as sorely as was Job, and she had sought a benign
spirit for relief. She was informed by the benign spirit that the Evil
One was black, and that when she discovered him she was to pronounce
three talismanic words. Now this poor woman sought Satan as dili-
gently as do most mortals. And one day she found him.

From behind a birch tree crowning a hill a big black nose was
outlined against the sky. Exclaiming over her discovery, she pro-
nounced the magic words, and the next morning found that her best
tea set was shattered to fragments. Upon receiving her subsequent
reproaches, the benign spirit rebuked her by saying that had she
waited until the rest of the head emerged from behind the tree she
would have recognized her son. This parable symbolizes a common
error regarding Russia. The black nose protruding occasionally in
the shape of massacres and riots has wrongly convinced foreigners
that the whole body is black. Knouts, Cossacks, Siberia, shackles, zero
—these blotches depict Russia to the average alien. But, while they
are conspicuous features, they are only freckles on an immense fairly
white surface.

ARTISTICALLY considered, there is an undeniable advantage
for Russian art in her very isolation. Her artists are not
obliged to pass through the various phases of Western art
movements, and therefore are not carried from one extreme to the
other, but able to calmly pursue their original way. When a one-
sided proletarian naturalism tinged the West, itself a protest against
the shallow idealistic formalism of preceding decades, Russian litera-
ture possessed its realistic poets, Tolstoi, Turgenyev, Dostoyevski,
who never ignored the inner processes for the sake of outward appear-
ances, and have thereby created that incomparable physiological
realism still lacking in the West. And because her great realists were
and are poets of the pen and brush, with heroic canvases to work
upon, she has given vent to no drawing-room art. Having no Zola,
no Maeterlinck was needed. And it is significant that Russia has
many true artists, such as frighten away the ghosts of the night.

There has been recently on exhibition in this country the best
creations of a hundred and forty-eight artists from ten different art
societies and two great art schools of the Empire. Nearly seven hun-
IVAN THE TERRIBLE AND THE HERMIT NICHOLAS SALOS
BY P. T. HELLER
MARRIAGE UNDER THE SILENT TSAR
BY PIROGOFF
RUSSIAN PEASANTS HARNESSED TOGETHER TO DO THE WORK OF DRAUGHT HORSES
dred exhibits were in the collection, and it may be of interest to add that a considerable number of the best paintings are candid records of Russian history. Needless to say, these masterpieces have never before been exhibited outside of Russia, or they would have been better known.

If the reader has any preconceived ideas about the absence of artistic liberty in Russia, this gallery of her masters will open up a surprising vista. Pictorially chronicling the progress of the Russian people from the nightmare hours preceding the Tartars to the red dawn of Ivan the Terrible, the brighter morning of Peter the Great and Catherine the Greater, down to the reigning Emperor, they are studies no less forceful than startling both in their conception and execution.

You see gleams in them radiated from Byzance and, in those gleams, religion, art, crafts, ascending cupolas, flashing domes. More dimly you get glimpses of moujiks, heavy-witted as cattle, coerced by forces which they cannot comprehend. You get also the outlines of cities such as Novgorod and notably Moscow, the last grand principality, which made Russia Muscovite and where was negotiated the elevation of warriors into princes and princes into Czars.

The word Czar is of Oriental origin and means power. It is not derived from Caesar as is sometimes supposed. Ivan was the first to apply it to himself, and if you would know Ivan you should study the work of Heller. This painter, a fellow worker with Verestchagin in the St. Petersburg Society of Artists, in a heroic canvas showing the Hermit Nicholas Salos during a famous expedition of Ivan to Pskoff, has depicted in vivid colorings the dramatic scene following the destruction of Novgorod and Pskoff. Ivan is visiting the Monastery of Pskoff, where, rather than present him with salt and bread, the hermit, feigning madness, offers the Emperor raw meat. Upon Ivan rejecting the morsel the anchorite arraigns the first of the Czars for subsisting on human blood and breaking the decalogue, as did the prophet of old. Staggered by the daring criticism the ruler is shown in the act of quitting the monastery and town.

Scarcely less startling is another picture by Galkin, a master in the school of Prince Peter Oldenburg, depicting Ivan with the Boyarin Morozoff tricked out as a court fool. This painting is epic in
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its wonderful power of simplicity. Ivan, humoring his fad for debauching monasteries, is pictured in an orgy outside of Moscow. Annoyed by the highly respected Boyarin refusing to join in the dissipation, the ruler has caused Morozoff to be arrayed as a jester. Amid the uproarious laughter of drunken courtiers the proud Prince is emulating the Pskoff hermit by addressing the sovereign in a speech full of courageous sarcasm. With dagger drawn a ruffian companion is awaiting the word to dispatch the offender. But Ivan, smitten with remorse, refuses to give the word. Prince Morozoff was subsequently restored to favor by the interposition of Prince Viazimsky, a scene pictured by Bucholtz in another painting.

Ryepin, Pirogoff, Bucholtz, Kosheleff, Shabounin and others bear on the historic torch, revealing with boldest rays the practices and dress of the Empire. They are cited simply to show that Russia is not as she is painted with respect to the limited scope of her artists. Painting by painting her masters record the prologues of progress, the first hesitant stammer of culture, the genesis of Russian commerce with aliens. Canvas by canvas bravely point the way in which Ivan raised his prostrate people from under the Tartar yoke and left them on their knees. Centuries passed with them in the same attitude. Nothing in the Spanish Inquisition is more tragic than the mental and mechanical tortures pictured of early Russia by her foremost contemporary artists. Kneeling, as was Russia before her first ruler, genuflections were insufficient. More positive submission was necessary. On command multitudes vacated the planet. Why? They never knew, it is recorded. His Majesty had so ordered, and who were they to disobey?

PAUL, the Czar, displeased with a regiment, ordered it to march. The loyal legion started. Paul added two words and pointed to Siberia. Off went the soldiers. This spirit is admirably caught by Shabounin in showing the impotence of Prince Souvoroff in exile, the hero soldier having suffered the disfavor of Paul I. Despite his popularity, Prince Souvoroff, banished to a village near Novgorod, mixes amid depressing conditions. His face and person are lighted by a glowing sunrise pouring through his cabin window. He is studying maps and military history. Shortly afterward, despairing of freedom, he was to petition the sovereign for permission to
enter a monastery. By way of reply the whimsical ruler despatched an imperial rescript, informing the exile of the desire of the Austrian Court that he should be appointed to command the allied armies in Italy, and summoned him to St. Petersburg, whence he was sent to Vienna.

But my reference to these notable and peculiarly Russian paintings is merely to emphasize the wide latitude afforded Russian artists in their choice of subjects, no less than to indicate the character and impressiveness of their work. One of the honors most coveted by young Russian artists to-day is a membership in the Association for Arranging Art Exhibitions in Russian Cities and Towns, an association that is sowing promising seed throughout the land.

Descending from the arts to the crafts of the Empire, one finds in the Russian peasantry a remarkable capacity for co-operation. Nor is this confined to agriculture alone, for Russia is tensely and compactly knitted with what are known as artels or unions, and their starosti. During the past generation many large manufacturers have discovered that these co-operative associations can be readily developed into promising manufacturing centers—and this is being done throughout the Empire with resulting benefits to the peasantry.

In the provinces of Vladimir and Moscow alone more than 10,000 peasants devote their winters to silk-weaving, and a far greater number to the weaving of cotton, linen and woolen fabrics. More than 200,000 peasants are numbered among co-operative associations for the building of carts, carriages and sledges. And many of their products are highly artistic, being used by the wealthiest classes, including the Imperial family. Over 150,000 moujiks are now engaged in different branches of cooperage, and about the same number in furniture and cabinet making. Preparing and manufacturing sheepskin and fur coats are more than 350,000 peasants, who thus work through the winters in their own svietelkas, often fifty miles and more from the nearest railway. Imposing as these figures are, they really fall short of the mark, as they only relate to the associations officially registered, for as many more moujiks work in smaller, unregistered associations in the remoter districts.

As to the artistic merit of much of this peasant work, not long ago a lady in Paris showed me a curious cabinet which she had bought at a sale, and which had a place of honor in her drawing-room. She
was not a little surprised to learn that it had been originally a Russian soap box of a sort made by the thousand in far away villages for export to Asia. Of other industries, Nijni-Novgorod has many thousand peasants manufacturing enamel ware of a superior quality for export to Persia, Bokhara, China, Europe and America, though a small percentage reaches this country. The manner of making this enamel is a trade secret very jealously guarded. In the Vladimir province and elsewhere hundreds of village communities are wholly engaged in manufacturing toys for Russian, Persian, Bokharan and Chinese children. Nearly 10,000 peasants are thus employed, and other thousands are solely occupied with the making of icons, or sacred pictures, one at least of which will be found in the izba of even the poorest moujik. In other words, the idea of the Russian nation, other than the higher classes, passing the winter months in apathetic idleness is absurdly unreal and grotesque.

Aside from its working hours, Russia rises superior to her neighbors in providing decent amusement for the immense laboring class whose meager earnings forbid them the amusements of the prosperous. Nearly every Russian city has a miniature Coney Island supported by the State or municipalities, the prevailing admission fees being from half a cent upward. St. Petersburg has the finest and cheapest popular theater in Europe. Where racial and religious considerations are not involved, the Russian laws are superior to those of many European countries. For ordinary murders, capital punishment is never inflicted, while the illegitimacy statute, amended three years ago, is the most liberal on earth, completely annulling the social stigma and other obstacles which usually attend this misfortune, which in the case of children is nothing more. Unfortunate is the word invariably employed to describe criminals and convicts. In short, Russia is the most mispainted nation on earth; but the black nose of the fable is being rapidly whitened, and, when the shadows are brushed away, it will ere long be seen that the satanic delusion accompanying it will also have vanished.
PRINCE SOUVOROFF IN EXILE. BY SHABOUNIN