

## CHAPTER IX

### PAINTING

**RUSSIAN art is very new and very old.** It has taken its place in the world of Western art, but it is still sensitive to the East.

And its sensitiveness to the East is not merely due to the Western rediscovery of the East, which makes Frenchmen and Englishmen look with delighted surprise on the work of Japanese artists as upon something absolutely new. It is born of a close, direct, and ancient connection with the East, the memory of which lies deep in popular feeling and expresses itself in a hundred minutiae of costume, decorative art, legend, and idiom. The thoughts of Russians, their conscious aspirations are now fixed on the West, and the period of heightened, almost morbid sensitiveness to Western intellectual and artistic fashions is not yet over. But Western feeling in Russia is often coloured by a variety of subconscious influences which, on closer analysis, may be traced back to the older civilisations of the South and East, to Asia Minor, to Persia, Central Asia, and even to China. The springs of Russian art are rich and manifold. But this does not mean that Russian art has developed in proportion to its splendid potentialities. The East and Middle East is often more picturesque and is in many respects more artistic than Russia. The difference is that in the East art is stereotyped. In Russia it is in movement and the movement is constantly gathering impetus and awakening older influences to new life in a new time. There is a lack of artistic habit in modern Russia, but there is a great deal of artistic sensitiveness, effort, and aspiration. The achievement is already very considerable, but the Russians are an artistically gifted people and give the impression of being capable of infinitely greater work than anything already

achieved. The very versatility of Russian talent renders it diffuse, and makes it difficult to define its precise qualities and tendencies. The Russians have given a striking demonstration of the originality and power of their talent in the novel and in music. They can point to the remarkable beauty of the old churches in Novgorod, in the Suzdal region and in and around Moscow as a proof of their architectural talent. **Have they a conspicuous talent for painting as well?** This is a question that is most difficult to answer because it is just in the matter of painting that the break between the old and the new Russia is most acutely felt.

A visitor to the museum of Alexander III, the gallery of the modern Russian school in St. Petersburg, might a few years ago have conceived very grave doubts as to the strength of the Russian genius in the sphere of graphic art. Passing from room to room he would probably have experienced a growing feeling of depression not unlike that produced by the architecture of the 'eighties and the 'nineties of the last century in most of the houses in the neighbourhood of the Nicholas Railway Station. Insipid landscapes by Shishkin, romantic highly coloured seascapes by Aivazovsky, conventional and historical pictures in which Tsars and boyars drearily bear the weight of the costumes of their period, huge and lifeless Oriental scenes by Semigradsky, groups of impossibly placid and sentimental peasants—the combined effect of such pictures as these is simply chilling. The Vereshchagin room seemed to promise some relief, but the colours in the big war pictures have faded, and the painter's assertive moralising, deprived of whatever justification it may once have had in brilliant colour effects, leaves one cold and indifferent. Vereshchagin's oriental scenes with their warmth of colour and elaboration of detail would serve as admirable illustrations for ethnographical and archaeological works. There are good portraits by Kramskoi and Ge, some charming old-fashioned genre pictures, such as Fedotov's "The Bride before the

Looking Glass," and "Inspecting the Bride," comforting flashes of talent in out-of-the-way corners. Yaroshenko's picture of the feeding of pigeons by prisoners from a railway-van has the attractiveness of a warm, humane mood expressed with a cheerful downrightness that would be impossible today. In the impetuosity and abounding vitality of Riepin there is something infectious. Some of his portraits of members of the Council of the Empire in its older form are distinctly impressive, particularly the portrait of Pobiedonostsev, and there is a great deal of rollicking humour in the picture of the Zaporogian Cossacks. There are many specimens of the work of Karl Brüllow, the most popular artist in the early half of the last century, but his "Last Day of Pompeii," that eighty years ago aroused such enthusiasm in Russia, seems lifeless now.

The general effect was, and, in spite of recent additions, still very largely is, one of a curious disproportion between Russian painting and the magnificence of Russian achievement in other spheres of art. The impression is heightened by a comparison with the wealth of inspiring tradition and the vistas of great opportunity revealed in another St. Petersburg museum, the Imperial Hermitage, one of the richest picture-galleries in Europe. The upper story contains a splendid display of the work of the great Western masters. There is a fine collection of Rembrandts, Velasquez is well represented, there are Leonardos and Raphaels, Fra Angelicos and Giorgiones, Rubenses, and Van Dycks. It is a truly Imperial collection. The Western art, within whose sphere modern Russian art is developing, exercises a powerful influence here. In the lower story are represented the sources and origins, the distant beginnings of art upon the great plain, the products of excavations in the south and south-east of Russia, vases and a dazzling variety of ornament from the Greek colonies in the south of Russia, metal-work of the Sassanids from the neighbourhood of the Urals, rings and bracelets from Scythian mounds. The East of yesterday

is represented, too, by elaborately woven tissues and curious armour from Central Asia. Below, the inspiration of the sweep of ancient civilisations across the great plain. Above, the finest inspiration of the West. It would be hard to imagine a more resplendent setting for a powerful Russian art. And that is why the Alexander III Museum is so disappointing.

But the Alexander III Museum does not, after all, give a fair view of modern Russian painting ; it is far from showing it at its best. A much more favourable impression is given by the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, where the works of Russian and Western painters, of classics and moderns, are so deftly intermingled as to create a sense of vital continuity, of a living movement of art in which Russia is co-operating with France and Germany and England. It is all the better for Russian art that Corot and Watteau and Manet are housed under the same roof as the Russians Levitan and Kuindzhi. The Russians fall into their true places, the sense of disproportion is lessened, the course of the development of Russian painting and its relation to Western schools is thrown into clearer relief, and what is characteristically Russian is more easily distinguished from what is the Western fashion of the moment. The fact, too, that the trustees of the Tretyakov Gallery follow with keen interest the movement of present-day Russian art and buy up the best work in the annual exhibitions is of immense importance for the formation of a just view, because during the last fifteen years there has been a striking revival in Russian painting, and much of the best work produced in Russia belongs to this period. The Alexander III Museum has, during the last two or three years, attempted to do a belated justice to the revival, but its purchases have not been extensive, and in the main it continues to represent an uninspiring and isolated yesterday.

The misfortune of Russian painting is that it has suffered from a series of breaks in its development. The most severe

wrench was given by Peter the Great, the result of whose passionate leap into Europe was a complete cessation of the older art tradition, while European art took root in Russia only very slowly, and it was long before anything like a fixed standard of taste was established. In fact, the state of Russian art in the eighteenth century was so deplorable that the appearance of such an admirable portrait-painter as Levitsky, whose portraits have the undying charm of mastery combined with intimate truth, is difficult to understand. If a Levitsky was possible in such a period, then such fine portraits as the Emperor Paul or the Mlle. Lopuhina of Borovikovsky are less astounding. But it was only in portrait-painting that Russia at the close of the eighteenth century could hold her own.

The brilliant literary movement of the Pushkin and Gogol period at the beginning of the nineteenth century was not accompanied by a correspondingly vigorous movement in painting. But a marked advance was made even here. Russian artists were deeply influenced by the romantic movement, various phases of which were reflected in the masterpieces of Kiprensky, whose portrait of himself is one of the works that inevitably arrest attention in the Alexander III Museum, in the soothing and refreshing country scenes of Venetsianov and such work as the delightful interior representing the painter and his family by Count Feodor Tolstoy, also to be seen in the Alexander III Museum. Fedotov was another painter of interiors, whose work with its depth of feeling, sureness of touch, and restraint of manner shows a happy mingling of romanticism and realism. The early years of the nineteenth century were a very attractive period in the history of Russian art, one to which the artists of the present day very gladly turn their eyes. There was a great deal of dilettantism, there was little real mastery, but scores of pictures painted then reveal such unaffected delight in beauty for its own sake that they are more pleasant to look upon than anything painted in Russia until toward the close

of the century. Moreover, the period produced a painter whom many modern critics are inclined to consider the greatest of all Russian artists, Alexander Ivanov.

Ivanov was a most interesting man, but of his artistic power it is almost impossible to judge by his completed pictures. His most famous work, "The

**Ivanov.**

Appearance of Christ to the People," which hangs in the Rumiantsev Museum in Moscow, reveals far less inspiration than the sketches by which it is surrounded. It is, in fact, in his unfinished sketches, his studies, that the free and powerful movement of the artist's talent finds its best expression. Ivanov throughout his life maintained a religious attitude to art, regarded his work as religious service. Born in 1806 he spent his childhood and youth in the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, where his father was a professor, and where he himself received his training. The growth of his talent was impeded by the dulling, deadening academic influences of his time, but a Society for the Promotion of Art sent him to Rome where he gradually found his true self. In Rome he devoted himself passionately to his art, held aloof from society, lived in poverty, and groped after methods of expressing the great conceptions inspired in him by the work of the Italian masters and the study of the gospel. The personality of Christ and the high ardour of spiritual conflict fascinated him, and he made unwearying efforts to give form and colour to his dream. He longed to go to Palestine in order to see Biblical scenes with his own eyes, but in default of means for the journey he visited a synagogue in Rome and studied the Jews in Leghorn. His studies of the head of Christ include a stern Hebrew face and the head of an Apollo Belvedere. He made a large number of sketches and water-colour studies of Biblical and more especially gospel scenes which, in spite of their unfinished character, are striking in their freshness of intuition. "Christ teaching in the Temple," "Christ teaching His Disciples," "Christ reading the Law and the

Prophets,"—these are some of the studies that indicate how **perpetually** and deeply the gospel story occupied Ivanov's mind. His mystical tendencies were intensified by his association with the German artist Overbeck. But they were a part of his nature, and even when, after the revolutions of 1848, he formally abandoned his faith, professed socialist ideals, and became the friend of Herzen and Chernishevsky, he remained a believer in spite of himself. For a time he fought against his longing to paint pictures on religious subjects, holding that this would be sinful for such an unbeliever as he now was. His very unbelief took the direction of his belief. When he wished to supplement the deficiencies of his general education he addressed himself to Strauss, the author of the "Life of Christ." He was, in fact, profoundly religious to the end, and when in 1857 he finally returned to Russia to exhibit "The Appearance of Christ to the People," on which he had worked for twenty years, he was coldly received, because in the prevailing materialism his mysticism was regarded as out of date. He died in the following year. His was a strange fate. His sketches and studies in the Rumiantsev Museum, the Tretyakov Gallery, and in the Botkin collection in St. Petersburg present a wealth of ideas, a boldness and originality of method, that suggest the discovery of a new world of art. Such sketches are that entitled "Joseph's Dream" ("Fear not to take Mary"), for instance, in which an angel of superhuman stature leads Mary enveloped in rays of light, or that strange study of the Lord writing the laws for Moses which is permeated with oriental mysticism. Ivanov's work had, indeed, the character of a groping back to the sources of great Russian art. It touched that sphere from which the old Russian iconographers drew their inspiration and which, towards the end of the century, was again approached by the most striking of the Russian artists of the latest period, **Vrubel**. When Ivanov tried to paint great pictures, however, he seems to have been paralysed by his academic training and the freshness and vigour manifested

in his studies abandoned him. Neither the "Christ and Mary Magdalene," in the Alexander III Museum, nor "The Appearance of Christ to the People" suffice to account for his growing reputation.

Ivanov's contemporary, Karl Brüllow, also a son of the professor in the Academy of Arts, was the first of Russian painters who won fame in his own country.

**Brüllow.** He was a typical academist, conventional in manner, with great technical skill and a passion for brilliant effects. He, too, studied in Rome, where he rapidly attained prominence. Here he painted that immense picture, "The Last Day of Pompeii," which now hangs in the Alexander III Museum and which, just after its completion, caused the Italian Press to rank its author with Raphael and Michel Angelo and aroused the enthusiasm of even Walter Scott. On his return to Russia Brüllow had a triumphal reception, was fêted, crowned with laurels, praised by Pushkin and Gogol, and overwhelmed with orders. He was made professor in the Academy of Arts and was entrusted with the work of painting the frescoes on the interior of the cupola of St. Isaac's Cathedral. This work illness compelled him to interrupt, and he died in Rome in 1852. His work is most fully represented in the Alexander III Museum in St. Petersburg, which contains forty-seven of his pictures. Brüllow was greatly influenced by Guido Reni and Domenico, and also by Poussin, and his dashing manner, his firmness of touch and his boldness of outline, struck the imagination of the Russian public of his time and aroused general interest in the art of painting. His technical skill had a good effect in raising the standard of workmanship in the Academy of Arts, which up till then had been very low. In any case, the place of Brüllow in the history of Russian painting is an important one, and although of late years it has been the fashion to deride him, some discerning critics are now beginning to point out certain valuable and original qualities in his pictures. For all that

the work of Brüllow presents little more than a local and historical interest.

And then after Ivanov and Brüllow there was again a break; a long, dull period of tendency art, or art with a purpose. Painting being, with the one exception of sculpture, the most feebly developed of all the arts in Russia, it suffered much more than either literature or music from the Nihilism that made its appearance in the 'sixties. When art was vehemently denied by the most popular leaders of thought in the name of the absolute supremacy of science it was a marvel that anyone painted at all. But the Academy continued to exist and trained painters, and these painters had to work in an atmosphere of an insistent denial of art. On the one hand, there was the chilling influence of academic routine which had been reinforced by the success of Brüllow. On the other hand, the most popular critics repudiated direct artistic vision and encouraged an absorption in theories, generalisations, and ideas. Employing academic methods the painters of the period tried to express ideas in their pictures, or repressing the play of fancy and the imagination to attain what they called "truth to life." Pictures must have a "subject" that could be stated in words. They must have a moral or social purpose. They must influence the mind of the beholder in the direction of a given theory. The curious thing is that this very denial and distortion of pure art made painting more popular. People did not cease to paint. There were more painters than ever before, and they induced a steadily widening circle to look at and admire their pictures. The "Back to the People" social theory ensured popularity for pictures in which peasant life was idealised. A typical picture of this kind is that of a teacher in a village school by Bogdanov-Bielsky, which now hangs in the Alexander III Museum. Nationalist influences played their part, too, and caused many painters to search for subjects in Russian history. Kramskoi was one of the early leaders of the movement, and Kramskoi was a man of keen intellect and deep

feeling, yet most of his work with the exception of his admirable portraits seems astonishingly below the real strength of the man. In a letter written in 1872 to a friend, a letter revealing the moral intensity which was the finest element in the art of his school and his time, Kramskoi thus describes the temper in which he painted his picture of "Christ in the Wilderness." "While I was working at it I thought much, prayed much, and suffered much. Sometimes of an evening you go for a walk, and wander along over the fields, on and on you walk until horror comes upon you, and then of a sudden you see a figure, a statue. At dawn, weary, agonised, worn with suffering, he sits alone among the stones, sad, cold stones; his hands spasmodically and firmly clenched, his fingers pressed into his palms, his feet wounded, his head sunken. He is plunged in thought; long has he been silent, so long that his lips seem to be baked dry; his eyes take no notice of surrounding objects, and only the brows twitch from time to time obedient to the laws of muscular movement. He feels nothing: he does not even feel that it is a little cold, does not feel that all his limbs are as though numbed from sitting so long motionless. There is not a movement anywhere, only on the horizon black clouds float from the East, and a few stray hairs afloat in the air stand horizontal in the breeze. **And he is thinking and thinking. It grows terrible.** How often have I wept before this figure! What then? Can that be painted? And you ask yourself and properly ask, **Can I paint Christ?** No, my dear fellow, I cannot, and I could not paint Him; I did paint, and painted until I had put the picture in a frame, painted until I and others had seen the picture. In a word, I committed an act of profanation, it may be, but could not but paint, I had to paint. . . . I can say that I painted Him with tears and blood. But probably my tears and my blood were not of quite good quality, for sometimes it seems to me that what I have painted is little like the figure I saw in the night time, and sometimes it seems as though there were no likeness at all.

In a word, I have the melancholy consciousness that there is no other lot for me but to paint the most trivial portraits of ordinary people—this is not false humility and you understand, and I hope will understand in what sense I say this." Altogether in reading Kramskoi's letters one feels that he was bigger and finer than his own art.

The main stream of the movement in time acquired a name. It was called *Peredvizhnichestvo*, from the *Peredvizhnia Vystavki*, or movable exhibitions which constituted the first attempt to disseminate a knowledge of painting in the Empire by giving the provincial towns an opportunity of seeing the annual exhibitions of the capitals. The popularisation of painting is one of the greatest services to Russian art rendered by the *Peredvizhniki*, and perhaps it was only by means of the didactic pictures, the paintings with a subject, a pathetic scene or an obvious purpose, which formed the staple of the exhibitions that the mass of the public not only in the provincial towns, but also in the capitals could have been induced to look at pictures at all. The influence of the movement is still strongly felt, and there are hundreds who prefer the chromo-lithographic methods of Vladimir Makovsky or the sentimentalism of Maksimov to the best work of the later schools.

Even in the worst periods there are born artists whose talent will out in spite of themselves and of their environment. The whole didactic movement was in a curiously ambiguous position. It involved an attempt to paint and not to paint at the same time, to mask, by colour and line, a covert denial of principles of art. But such a position was not easily tenable, and even its most determined defenders, such as Kramskoi, were sometimes carried away by a purely artistic impulse and painted with sincerity and vigour. Vereshchagin, the tireless traveller, the musing spectator of ghastly battlefields, the semi-official painter of the Steel and Iron Period of the bureaucracy, whose didacticism took the semi-official form of pacifism but was yet sincere, the depicter of

the horrors of war who, by a strange irony of fate, met his death in the blowing up of the Petropavlovsk in Port Arthur—Vereshchagin was strong enough often to allow himself the luxury of painting as his heart moved him. But there is another much more powerful artist who belongs wholly to the period of the Peredvizhniki and accepted their principles without demur, but by the very force and energy of his talent frequently broke down the barriers of his school.

**Ilya Riepin** is a born artist. Of peasant birth, self-taught, he painted out of sheer high spirits, out of an irrepressible delight in the mere process of painting.

**Riepin.** He early came under the influence of the chief authority of the "art with a purpose" movement, the critic Vladimir Stasov, and has never been able to shake off the fetters of his school. He is hampered by a certain intellectual inertness. But he was sharply distinguished from his contemporaries, not only by the vigour of his talent, but by his constant striving after perfection in workmanship. He paints illustrative pictures, pictures with a subject, pictures of popular life, but even the illustrative or didactic purpose cannot wholly repress Riepin's imaginative energy or dim the excellence of his workmanship. His most characteristic works are "The Zaporogian Cossacks," in the Alexander III Museum, and in the Tretyakov Gallery the pictures of "The Haulers," and of Ivan the Terrible holding in his arms the son whom he had murdered. "The Haulers" vividly depicts a picturesque band of labourers on the Volga and is a striking specimen of the populist type of picture. "Ivan the Terrible" is much better painted than any other historical picture of the period, but the agony of the Tsar is too obtrusively expressed to be wholly convincing now. In fact, most of Riepin's pictures now have the unfortunate quality of attracting attention but failing to arouse any deep emotion, just because the desire to arouse emotion is too obvious. But several portraits of his are of permanent value—not that of the barefoot Tolstoy, which is sentimental and

unreal, but those of the composer Musorgsky and some of the members of the Council of the Empire—and his unflinching joy in his art constantly wages a battle, often a successful one, with the defects he owed to his school. Riepin now lives in Kuokkala, just over the Finnish frontier, and occasionally exhibits. But with the decline of his vitality his defects have grown more glaringly apparent, and such a picture as that recent one of a street procession after the promulgation of the Constitution is depressing in its lack of proportion and taste.

Nicholas Ge was another artist who was far better than his time. It is strange how frequently he rose not only above

his environment, but above his own defective

Ge.           tive and careless workmanship, for which probably his environment was in the long

run chiefly responsible. Ge possessed a curious and original talent, and, moreover, while he accepted generally the ideals of the didactic school, he possessed, in contrast with most of his friends among the intelligentsia, strong religious interests. It was his religious interests that served to liberate his talent from the influence of the dulling Nihilist aspect of current positivism and materialism. He was a friend of Tolstoy's, sharing the great writer's enthusiasm for the Gospel, but not his denial of art. With all these qualities he cultivated a stern realism, and this led him to some astonishing results. His "Golgotha," for instance, which hangs in the Luxembourg in Paris, has in its terrible earnestness a tragic power and intensity that is reminiscent of Russian realism in its great moments. The realistic method is employed in another striking Gospel picture in the Tretyakov Gallery entitled "What is Truth," in which an ascetic Christ who here, too, "hath no form or comeliness that we should desire him," stands before a stout and contemptuous Pilate. There is a study of Ivanov's on the same subject, and it is interesting to compare the two, for there is a certain unmistakable spiritual affinity between these artists. Ge is, perhaps, more a man of his own period than an isolated genius like Ivanov.

What Ge expressed seems to have been the essentially religious aspiration which, in spite of a vehement denial of religion, was implicit in the positivist social effort of his time. Besides that, Ge was a most talented portrait-painter with a fine sense of colour, and such a portrait as that of Mme. Petrunkevich, a lady standing at the window of a country house before an avenue of lime-trees, is full of a warm and delightful humanness.

About the beginning of the 'nineties there were indications of a new movement in painting just as there were signs of a change in literature. Certain artists grew weary of the perpetual subjugation of art to various "purposes," and tried to free themselves from the fetters of the didactic school. For this change the influence of Riepin at his best was partly responsible, and Chistiakov, a professor of the Academy of Arts, who had an unrivalled knowledge of the technique of painting, a passion for the Italian masters, and an exhilarating enthusiasm for colour effects, imparted his zest to several of his pupils. Other influences operated, too—French impressionism, the work of Germans like Böcklin, Mensel, and Wilhelm Leibl, and some subtle change in the spirit of the times. The movement of change was a gradual one and did not gather strength until towards the end of the 'nineties, but its final result was to bring to the front a number of first-class artists, to bring about a revolution in taste that twenty years ago would have seemed incredible, and firmly to establish painting as an art in Russia. Up till about 1908 the representatives of the older school maintained a stubborn conflict with the modernists, but now the conflict is practically over, for the critics, with insignificant exceptions, are now wholly on the side of the new school, while some of the younger artists now consider even the modernists out of date. And one very important result has been effectively to repudiate the suggestion the Museum of Alexander III seemed formerly to convey, that the artistic genius of the Russians had failed them when it came to painting.

The beginnings of the new movement are closely associated with the names of the landscape-painter Levitan, the marvellous portrait-painter Sérov, and Vrubel, the master of colour who saw strange visions. Through these men and their immediate successors the Russian spirit came to its own. They showed how to draw freely from the wells of the hidden thought of the nation. This is most easily seen in the case of Levitan, who was not wholly of the new movement and had but a slight connection with the old. He gave an intimate interpretation of that landscape which counts for so much in the mental make-up of the Russian people. And his suggestion of the inner meaning of field and forest and river pointed the way out from the narrow limits of didacticism and realism into that broad world of spiritual discovery in which the Russian people is most truly at home. Levitan was a friend of Chehov's, and the painter and the writer had much in common. Their work had a solvent power. Both Chehov's stories and Levitan's pictures created a mood, indefinite and dreamy, but liberating by reason of its very contemplativeness. There was nothing challenging in this mood. It aroused little conflict, and both Levitan and Chehov secured recognition during their brief lifetime. But when the Russian public had been drawn subtly into the mood, old prejudices gradually lost their hold, and the way was prepared for the new range of ideas that has transformed Russian painting and opened a new period in Russian literature.

The Russian landscape is not monotonous as it may often appear when seen from the window of a railway train. On the contrary, it is rich, suggestive, and full of

**Landscape.** variety and colour. The plain has a fascination that steadily grows as it little by little reveals its manifold beauties. What moves most deeply is the sense of limitless space, and then with this sense gradually mingle the colour and scent and sound and gleam of the passing seasons—the sudden and tumultuous outburst of

brilliant green in the spring, the dark and unchanging pine-forests relieved by slim trunks of birches with leaves bright and joyously waving ; the unfenced fields of tall and swaying rye and all the wealth and glory of the summer, the far-flowing rivers with tall sails of barges or a steamer rounding a distant bend, the long line of a village on the crest of a hill, a lake gleaming in the sun and reflecting a gallant and endless procession of clouds in a fathomless sky, a white church or monastery half concealed on the border of forest and meadow, air that is all light poured forth unceasingly ; the bright green of spring and summer yielding to the glowing and golden triumph of an autumn hushed and at rest in completed effort ; and then the long winter with its subtler and more remote beauty of snow and sky, and the sighing of winds from the end of the world, and enfolding silences. In the south of Russia there is the beauty of the steppes covered with wild-flowers in spring, that wide-rolling, uplifting expanse that moved Gogol to cry when words failed him, " Damn it all, how lovely you are, you steppes ! " And the north has in May and June its white nights that are not so beautiful in the city where their pale light falls on dead masses of stone and deserted squares, but beyond the city gates where forest and river and sleeping village become the ghostly substance of a dream, and where on the distant horizon the sunset glows only a hand's breadth away from the mounting dawn.

Levitan entered into the spirit of the scenery of Northern and Central Russia. There had been landscape-painters

before him. Silvester Shchedrin, who lived

**Levitan.** in Italy in the twenties of the last century, has left beautiful Italian landscapes. Venet-

sianov and his followers treated the tender and more idyllic aspects of Russian scenery. Shishkin was a realist, conscientious, laborious, and dull, but his faithful study of nature had a useful effect on the development of Russian landscape-painting. Kuindzhi, who died two or three years ago, and

several of whose pictures hang in the Tretiakov Gallery, had his moments of discernment, boldness, and power, though his methods were conventional. Levitan found a way of his own of expressing the intimate beauty of Russian landscape. He was not a Russian by race. He was the son of a Jewish teacher who made a bare living by giving lessons. But he grew up in Moscow in and around which the Russian spirit is at its strongest, and he proved remarkably sensitive to Russian influence. Even the spirit of the Orthodox Church affected him, and it is related that he would often slip quietly into a village church during evening service and listen to the singing. He was trained in the 'seventies in the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, and in spite of his extreme poverty distinguished himself as a pupil. Naturally he at first yielded to the influence of the dominant school and especially of Shishkin. But Polienov, a pupil of the St. Petersburg professor Chistiakov, whose teaching had a stimulating effect on a number of Moscow artists, suggested to him a new attitude towards the treatment of light. The friendship of other talented artists, Korovin, Sérov, and Ostrouhov, a residence at Plios on the Volga above Nizhni-Novgorod, journeys abroad, more especially a visit to Paris during the exhibition of 1889, deepened his artistic sensitiveness and led him to new discoveries in craftsmanship. His early pictures were not accepted by the committee of the Movable Exhibitions, but from 1888 until the end of the 'nineties his pictures were hung annually by this the most influential arbiter of that day. The freshness and originality of his work attracted general attention, and the fact that in some of the best of his pictures exhibited in the early 'nineties traces of the influence of the "art with a purpose" school are to be seen in a certain insistence on effective aspects in landscape, made Levitan all the more acceptable to a public accustomed to striking pictorial effects. His picture entitled "A Quiet Habitation," showing a monastery on a river-bank under the shadow of a forest, and another well-known

picture, "Eternal Peace,"—showing a little wooden church with wooden crosses over a few graves on a headland on the Volga, and before it the sweep of waters, above the expanse of the sky,—are examples of this manner. Later Levitan used his gift of poetic intuition in revealing the beauty of the most ordinary scenes, he cultivated a greater reserve of manner, a power to express intimate beauty by the simplest means. "Spring," "Summer," "Autumn," "Winter," the names of these later pictures and studies mean little, the pictures speak for themselves. Levitan may almost be said to have discovered the beauty of Russian scenery. One of the most distinguished of living artists and critics, Alexander Benoit, has declared that it was only after the appearance of Levitan's pictures that he began to believe in the charm of nature in Russia. Levitan was a poet with a fine sense of the music of colour and line, and the effect of his work has been gently to lead on into a new world of natural beauty in which there is nearly always a tinge of sadness. He enjoyed success during his lifetime, but he was restless in his forward movement, chafed under the bonds of the prevailing school, and gladly welcomed the innovators who made their appearance towards the end of the 'nineties. Death prevented his throwing in his lot entirely with the new movement. He passed away in 1900 at the age of forty. A characteristic saying of his was, that it is the ideal of a landscape-painter to render his mentality so sensitive as to hear the very grass growing.

Levitan's friend, Valentin Sérov, who died in 1911, was the best portrait-painter of his time in Russia, and one of the best in Europe. He went his own way  
Sérov. from the very beginning. His portrait of Mlle. Mamontova, exhibited in Moscow in 1887, when he was only twenty-two years old, aroused amazement by its vividness, its originality, and its brilliant technique. And from year to year since that time his portraits have given sure, unflinching, and constantly deepening

pleasure. His work convinces and delights. It is at once severely true and serenely beautiful. Sérov never flattered his sitters, never tried to flatter them. He was, in fact, rather inclined to emphasise their weak points, and his portraits often contain a faint element of irony. This irony is in itself a relief from the sentimentalism, the merely external realism of the earlier school. Yet his portraits are very real, very living. They startle by their revelation of the singular beauty of mere vitality. The sitters are often very ordinary people, neither particularly handsome nor particularly ugly. But Sérov discovers the special and personal way in which they concentrate and express the invincibly beautiful process called life. Their personality is interpreted in relation to beauty. Sometimes the interpretation is merciless, and the striking portrait of the dancer, Ida Rubinstein, which now hangs in the Alexander III Museum, is almost vindictive in the severity of its criticism.

Sérov was the son of the well-known composer who died when the boy was eight years old. Two years afterwards in Paris he made the acquaintance of Riepin who took great interest in Sérov and secured his admission to the St. Petersburg Academy at the early age of fifteen. There he studied under Professor Chistiakov, whose erudition and enthusiasm counted for a great deal in Sérov's development. But he revolted against academic routine and left without completing his course. His association with the family of the Moscow manufacturer Mamontov, a man of broad culture and an ardent patron of painting, music, and the drama, had a strong educative influence on Sérov. The result of his varied training was that he acquired that imprint of fine general culture which is characteristic of most of the Russian artists of the latest period. He was a man of great sincerity, abhorred all forms of compromise, valued liberty above all things, and was consistently true to himself and to his talent. The Peredvizhniki did not recognise Sérov's talent until towards the end of the nineties when he had far outgrown them. He became one of

the leaders among the new school of artists grouped around the review *Mir Iskusstva* (The World of Art), and by this group he was honoured as a guide and a master. His early death at the age of forty-six was felt as an irreparable loss. A great many of his best portraits are privately owned, but some are to be seen in the public galleries. The Alexander III Museum has portraits of the Princess Orlova and the painter's father, the composer Alexander Sérov, as well as a number of studies for theatrical decorations, and Sérov's work is well represented in the Tretyakov Gallery of the Advisory Council, of which he was for many years a member.

Sérov as an admirable portrait-painter belongs wholly to the world of Western European art, and there is little in him that is distinctively Russian except, perhaps,

**Vrubel.** the quality of his irony. He was one of those painters who by virtue of broad culture and fine workmanship maintained and developed a rich vital connection with Western tradition and influence. Vrubel, the friend of Levitan and Sérov, and the most interesting and the most perplexing of modern Russian painters, was an artist of a very different character. He was of Polish origin, and his work is more pronouncedly Russian than that of many painters who are Russian by birth, just as the Jew Levitan displayed a peculiar sensitiveness to the inner meaning of Russian landscape. But Vrubel was born in Kiev, where the Byzantine tradition of the Russians and not the Latin tradition of the Poles has the strongest hold. He studied classical philology at the St. Petersburg University, and by education, though not in instinct and manner, he was a Russian. Perhaps the very fact of non-Russian origin accounts for a heightened sensitiveness to certain distinctively Russian impressions. At any rate, Vrubel's interest turned towards the ecclesiastical origins of Russia, and during a residence in Italy he made a special study of the Byzantine frescoes and mosaics in Ravenna. In the early stages of his career he was greatly influenced by the work of Alexander

Ivanov, whose mysticism and Orientalism were peculiarly attractive to him. He was engaged, together with the artist Victor Vasnetsov, to paint frescoes on the walls of the Cathedral of St. Vladimir in Kiev, but the officials in charge of the work looked on Vrubel with disfavour, and not one of his studies found a place on the walls. Vrubel's suggestions are said, however, to have been of great value to Vasnetsov, who was a capable artist, and in an attempt to revive ecclesiastical art has done some interesting work which might have been more valuable had he not so quickly fallen into subjection to conventional influences. In the museum at Kiev there is a remarkable sketch of Vrubel's for the St. Vladimir frescoes representing the Resurrection. The sketch is full of a strange spirit of asceticism mingled with a remote, barely perceptible ecstasy. The figure of Christ is conceived in the stern, unearthly Byzantine temper, the character of the halo encircling a shining cross is suggestive of Ivanov, while the angels on either side are thoroughly Oriental. Vrubel's fate resembles that of Ivanov in that the best of his work consists of unfinished or undeveloped sketches and studies. But these sketches and studies display such an extraordinarily and original genius, such a rich play of fancy, such a fine sensitiveness to spiritual discords suggestive of unattainable harmonies, that one hardly regrets that he was unable to bring his work to completion. Perhaps its very incompleteness is one of the essential features of such allusive, such highly-strained work as that of Vrubel. Much of his energy was expended on purely decorative effects, on endlessly curious combinations of line and colour, which in their sheer delightful purposelessness form as sharp a contrast as anything that could be imagined to the superficial realism of the earlier school.

The most striking picture of Vrubel's, the picture by which his name will always be remembered, is "The Demon," in the Tretiakov Gallery. This picture was hung at the "World of Art" Exhibition in 1906, which marked a turning-point in

the attitude of the general public towards the new school and presaged its final victory. Vrubel was suffering at that time from the mental trouble which clouded his later days, and in his sad delirium he used to go down to the exhibition and retouch his picture again and again. The work bears unmistakable traces of this treatment; there is insanity in the eyes of the demon, and perhaps it was the effort of giving form to his tremendous conception that overtaxed the artist's faculties. It is curious that he should have chosen such a subject, curious and very characteristic of the tendency of Russian art to return at certain stages to the world of Eastern mysticism. Byron wrote of "a woman wailing for her demon lover." The phrase impressed the Russian poet Lermontov. In the atmosphere of Eastern legend that surrounds the towering mountains of the Caucasus Lermontov developed the suggestion and produced his finest poem "The Demon," which tells of the tragic love of a proud, solitary, world-weary demon for the daughter of a Georgian chieftain. Vrubel, whose imagination most readily responded to the call of the East, seems to have felt an influence even more thrilling and profound than that suggested by the fierce intensity of Lermontov's description of the demon aimlessly winging his hopeless way around the peaks of the Caucasus. The picture stands as an acutely distressing and amazingly beautiful record of what he felt. The unspeakably tragic face of the demon, gazing out from amidst a confused mass of cloud and wing, the shimmering of pale colour, the light that has lost the joy of light, the subtlety of the symbolical details of the hundreds of restless curves and folds in the feathers and the clouds—the picture is a last conquest of beauty over despair. Vrubel did not recover his reason and died two years after this picture was first exhibited.

Levitan, Sérov, and Vrubel were liberators. Their work as it gradually accumulated before the public eye made work of the older type almost impossible. There was a fierce struggle between the new school and the old. The leading

critic of the older school, Vladimir Stasov, would have nothing to do with the innovators, but the innovators had on their side great resources. They were not only talented artists, but cultivated men. The foundation by MM. Serge Diagilev and Filosofov of the review, *Mir Iskusstva* (The World of Art), in 1898, gave a great impetus to the new movement and brought it into close connection with the corresponding movement in literature. Polemical articles, accounts of the latest developments in Western art, studies in Russian peasant and ecclesiastical art, together with admirable reproductions, and verse and prose calculated to arouse greater sensitiveness to all the finer forms of art made the review a most effective organ of attack on prevailing conservatism. The review ceased publication in 1904. Its work was partly continued by Briusov's organ *Viesy* (The Scales), and partly by the *Zolotoe Runo* (Golden Fleece), an expensive illustrated organ published in Russian and French in Moscow from 1906 to 1908. The only illustrated art review existing at present is the *Apollon*, published in St. Petersburg, which soberly treads the paths opened up with so much daring and energy by the *Mir Iskusstva*.

The artists grouped around the *Mir Iskusstva* formed a society of their own for exhibition purposes. Then this society split up and reformed, and disappeared and reappeared, so that there are now several societies which include artists representing the new movement. And, indeed, the movement is no longer new. It is generally recognised. It holds the field. Those of its pioneers who are still alive are now the most highly honoured artists in Russia. The principle they so insistently advocated, the principle of individual liberty of expression, has become a commonplace to the extent that a small group of Futurists now receives a tolerant hearing. And there are signs of a reverse process; some of the pioneers of individualism are suggesting the necessity of a new standard, a new canon of painting.

In any case, the result of the liberative movement in

painting has been to bring to the front a very large number of talented artists. There are at present so many artists in Russia who paint good pictures that an exhibition of the modern school is rarely disappointing. Something is very perceptibly lacking now that Vrubel and Sérov have passed away, but on the part of those who remain there is a great variety of interesting effort. One of the great advantages of the new school is the free play it gives to individual talent. So many diverse forms of effort are represented here. There are, for instance, historical painters of varying types eager to discover and reveal the beauty of the past of Russia. The new movement in historical painting began in the late 'eighties with Victor Vasnetsov and Surikov, the latter of whom was particularly successful in the employment of new technical methods to express his deep poetic sense of the meaning of the past. Well-known pictures of Surikov's are "The Conquest of Siberia by Yermak and the Cossacks," in the Alexander III Museum, and that of the "Boyarina Morozova," who was persecuted for her support of the Old Believers, in the Tretiakov Gallery. Some critics note affinities between Surikov and Dostoievsky, and Surikov's work is certainly far removed from anything in the nature of conventional and official historical painting. M. Nesterov at one time gave promise of being a penetrating and original painter of traditional Russia, but when he mentally submitted to tradition instead of remaining simply a sympathetic observer he became conventional and sentimental in his treatment. A good example of his early work is seen in "The Hermit" in the Tretiakov Gallery. His later manner is represented by a number of pictures in the Alexander III Museum.

The delight in Russian scenes and Russian tradition is expressed more intensely by several artists who represent a later stage of the new movement, and do not attempt to observe realistic principles. Ivan Bilibin is attracted by the style of popular art, by the queer conventionalised figures to

be found in old chap-books, or carved or painted on the old-fashioned wooden vessels of the peasantry. He excels in the illustration of fairy-tales and in the humorous presentation of various scenes from Russian mythology. Like all the artists of the new school he has joined ardently in the movement for raising theatrical decorations to the level of fine art.

Nicholas Roehrich is at once an archaeologist and an artist possessed of a fine sense of fitness in style. The scenes over which he broods in imagination as an archaeologist, scenes of the coming of the Vikings over the northern waters, of an enclosure for idols in pre-historic Russia, of some Russian maiden of ancient days dreaming of her lover on a hillside, he presents with a quaint assumption of conventionalised outline and colouring that is reminiscent of old tapestries, but does not conceal a very warm and living artistic interest in the distant past.

An eager interest in the real Russia as it is to-day is evinced by that powerful and original artist, Maliavin, whose pictures of Russian peasant women are simply astonishing in their glow of colour and their turbulence of animal spirits.

In St. Petersburg there is a group of artists who are attracted not so much by the distant past of Russia as by the comparatively near past of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. E. Lanceret has painted very pleasant pictures of the Empress Elizabeth and of a naval inspection in the reign of Peter the Great. M. Dobuzhinsky, a talented Lithuanian from Vilna, has a good picture of Peter the Great shipbuilding, but his best work consists in a presentation of the cold, hard spirit of machinery, in laying bare the skeleton of the modern town. Dobuzhinsky also has some quaint scenes from old by-streets in Vilna and some very good portraits.

An artist of great influence and authority in St. Petersburg is Alexander Benois, who may be called the leader of the St. Petersburg group. Benois rarely deals with Russian subjects, although the past of Russia has not altogether escaped the

range of his extraordinary productivity. His congenial sphere is eighteenth century France, more especially the Versailles of Louis XIV, to which he returns year after year with the same unfailing tenderness of retrospective imagination. In numberless water-colour pictures he recalls all the dreamy and pleasant nooks, the green bowers, the sleeping ponds of that distant haven of repose. Benois is an art critic of knowledge and discernment, and he first distinguished himself by writing, while yet a student at the St. Petersburg University, an account of Russian art for the *History of Art* by the well-known German critic, Richard Muther. Benois took a prominent part in the battles fought around the *Mir Iskusstva*, and has constantly championed the new movement in the press. Of late years he has been in great demand as a designer of scenery and costumes for the theatre, and he has been engaged as chief adviser on questions of decorative art to the Moscow Art Theatre.

Konstantin Somov is another St. Petersburg painter who is attracted by eighteenth century France. But his work has not the dreamy contemplativeness of Benois. There is something bitter in his brilliant and concentrated statement of the splendour of the pre-revolutionary period. His work resembles a series of cameos in its minuteness of finish, its fineness of proportion, and its extraordinary vividness of detail. And throughout his paintings, in his boudoirs, his trim avenues, his covert meetings in cool by-ways, there is an implicit and subtle satire upon the confused and ungainly present, an acrid assertion of the claims of an artificial world. As a portrait-painter Somov is only to be compared with Sérov, and his portrait of his father, for many years Curator of the Collections in the Hermitage, is a masterpiece. Strangely enough, the curious bitterness that marks so many of Somov's eighteenth century studies disappears in his portraits.

Ivor Grabar is a scholar-artist of wide and precise learning, who, after exhibiting a number of pictures that displayed an unusual mastery of light effects—one picture entitled "Hoar

Frost" may be particularly instanced,—has devoted himself to the publication of a *History of Russian Art* in several volumes, and to the congenial work of criticism and selection involved in his present position as one of the curators of the Tretyakov Gallery.

The work of the decorative artists, Golovin, Bakst, and Sudeikin, has attracted widespread attention because of the brilliant results they have achieved in the sphere of theatrical **decoration**. It was only the new movement with its complete emancipation from conventional subject and purpose and its assertion of the principle of liberty of expression that made possible the play of fancy, the roving alertness to varied suggestion which led to a revival of purely decorative art. In this particular sphere Russian art has made real discoveries.

There is one artist, who died in 1910 after a very brief career, and who stands apart from nearly all his contemporaries in his whole manner of expression. This is Churlianis, a young Lithuanian musician and painter, whose attempts to give colour and outline to musical suggestions form an interesting parallel with the composer Skriabin's achievement in writing a colour symphony corresponding to his symphony of music. Born in 1875 in a little town near Vilna, the son of a church organist, Churlianis was enabled, with the aid of a local magnate, Prince Ogninsky, to study at the Warsaw and afterwards at the Leipzig Conservatory. Shortly after completing his musical studies he began to paint, and his paintings took the form of harmonies of colour full of musical suggestion. This work attracted the attention of St. Petersburg artists, especially of the artist's compatriot Dobuzhinsky. Churlianis moved from Warsaw to St. Petersburg in 1909. His pictures were exhibited in the Russian capital and aroused wonder and a novel kind of pleasure. There was no definite subject in these pictures. No one could possibly say what they were all about, but the remarkable thing was that through the medium of a subtle play of colour, of suns, seas, fragments of rock, rainbows, archways,

shadowy and fantastic figures all mingling in apparent indefiniteness, floating in ethereal transparence, they did actually convey a genuinely musical expression, soothing, delighting, and strangely appealing. Even the profane in matters of art felt the charm and there was no outcry against Churlianis as there was against some of the Russian representatives of post-impressionism who made their appearance about the same time. In St. Petersburg Churlianis began to develop his musical suggestions in more complex imaginative forms, and in the fantastic and dream-like beauty of "The Rider" (on the pale horse), which was exhibited the year before his death, he seems to have united powerful musical suggestiveness with greater boldness and definiteness of pictorial expression. But as was the case with Vrubel, with whom Churlianis has some affinity, for there was a strongly musical element in Vrubel's work, the artist's reason failed to endure the strain of listening to and watching for the beauty on the borderland of two worlds. He died in 1910 in a hospital for the mentally diseased. Churlianis' work is beautiful in itself, and is particularly interesting in its detailed suggestion of correspondences between sound and colour, and in its indication of some more remote and subtle possibilities of expression than those hitherto attained.

A score of other names might be mentioned—Korovin, who like Sérov was one of the pioneers of the new movement in Moscow, Borisov-Musatov, the hunchback dreamer, whose ideal of beauty was the Russian country house with a garden, an avenue, and a bevy of gracious maidens, the later landscape-painters, Rylov and Perepletchikov, Bogaiievsky, the genre-painter Kustodiev, who delights in the contrasts and harmonies of colour in Russian village life, and many more besides. But the mere recital of the capacities and qualities of these artists would present few novel or distinctive features. Given the principle of fundamental liberty, the example of the leaders of the new movement, and a number of clever painters who are sensitive to all the movements in the West,

a great many good pictures are bound to be produced. The standard is higher in Russia now than it has ever been, and this is true not only of the artists but of the public as well. The Art Schools, the Academy of Arts, the Moscow School of Painting, Architecture and Sculpture train every year scores of young artists, a certain proportion of whom become mere routine workers, while others eagerly press forward, make experiments, form parties, are "left" in the sense of being progressive, or "extreme left" in the sense of returning beyond the primitives, finding inspiration in the art of cave-dwellers, or else becoming Cubists or Futurists. Many go abroad for training in the schools of Paris and Munich and come back full of new ideas and new methods. Foreign influences are strongly felt, particularly the influence of Paris art fashions, but Russian painting has now attained a position of such independence, of such inherent vigour that it easily assimilates foreign influences without any loss to national individuality. The one English artist who has had an appreciable influence in Russia is Aubrey Beardsley. There are many exhibitions every year, in the later part of the winter and in the spring, exhibitions of the Academy and the Union of Artists and of the *Mir Iskusstva* Society, of the New Society of Artists, and of other societies representing various phases of the new movement. The centres of Russian art are St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev, and many of the pictures of the year are often shown in provincial towns after exhibition in the capitals. There are a number of able and discriminating art critics including MM. Benois, Synnerberg, Yaremich, and A. Ivanov in St. Petersburg, and MM. Grabar and Muratov in Moscow. A close connection is now maintained between painting and the theatre on the one hand and painting and literature on the other, and all sides gain from this more intimate contact.

Very striking, too, is the effect of the new movement on public taste. From about 1905 till 1912 the prevailing view on aesthetic matters underwent a complete change. A new

interest was aroused in art for its own sake. The public came to the earlier exhibitions of the new school in a supercilious, sceptical, hostile mood. With the years the work of this school has lost its strangeness and a real sympathy has gradually grown up between public and artists. There is a rapidly increasing demand for cheap and popular books on art, biographies of famous artists, native and foreign, cheap reproductions of well-known pictures, and the like. Picture post cards with reproductions of the best pictures in the annual exhibitions are widely sold. This development of aesthetic interest has had a marked effect on personal habits, on the adornment of the home, and more particularly on dress. In the first revulsion of feeling against the indifference to dress that formerly prevailed, the public in the large towns, more especially the women, fell into glaring extremes of bad taste. About the years 1907 and 1908 the display of dress in theatres and concert-halls was simply barbarous in its crude ostentation. Of late years, however, there has been a tendency to discover a new beauty in simplicity, and in quieter combinations of colour, and in public assemblies nowadays the number of people who dress with taste and refinement is steadily gaining ground.

Whither is the new movement tending? Naturally it forms part of a general European movement, and will, in the main, follow the direction that is taken in the West. But will it acquire the national, originative power already displayed by Russian literature and music? Will it, in its turn, exert an influence on the West and send forth fresh impulses leading to new discoveries? In one sense Russian painting has only just begun to be. It has only recently secured a firmly established position and entered broad ways of development. It has been learning the lessons of the West, coming to itself through the adoption of Western craftsmanship, gradually feeling its way towards an expression of the national consciousness. Ivanov and Vrubel have suggested in their work the interesting possibilities of nationalism in art. But the

real possibilities of Russian art, in spite of the historical, ecclesiastical, and landscape painters, in spite of Surikov and Levitan, of Vasnetsov, Roehrich, and Bilibin, have as yet barely been touched upon. The national consciousness has not been plumbed by the methods of painting. And this has lately been illustrated—apart from the extraordinarily suggestive work of Ivanov and Vrubel—in a very curious way. It was only in the winter of 1912–13 that an exhibition of ikons in Moscow made it possible to form something like an adequate conception of the beauty and value of ancient Russian art. Ten or fifteen years ago ancient ikons were valued only by a few amateurs who gradually formed collections, the best of them being that of M. Ostroukhov, the curator of the Tretyakov Gallery. But after the publication of the Tolerance Edict securing liberty of worship to the Old Believers, who have secretly guarded not only the old devotional books, but a large number of ancient pictures, many ikons of unexpected beauty were brought to light. Interest was awakened, collectors made inquiries, and the best of the newly discovered treasure was soon bought up, the prices rising in proportion to the increased demand. The products of the search were exhibited in Moscow during the winter, and constituted a new revelation of the variety, the beauty, and the originality of ancient Russian art. It is true that Russian ecclesiastical art with its frescoes, its mosaics, its ikons, was imported from Byzantium, and that the authors of the earliest work of this kind in Russia were Greeks. But the Russians soon learned to modify Byzantine art after their own fashion, to give it a national character in which were assimilated a variety of influences ranging from Italy in the West to Persia in the East. Novgorod was the earliest home of Russian ecclesiastical art, and the ikons and frescoes of Novgorod are full of force and originality. The work done in Novgorod was continued and developed in the Suzdal region and in Moscow. The best-known of the Suzdal masters is Andrei Rublev, who lived in the fifteenth century, has

been compared with Beato Angelico, and painted the frescoes in the Uspensky Cathedral in Vladimir, and a well-known picture of the Trinity now preserved in the Cathedral of the Troitsko-Sergeievskaja Lavra, near Moscow. Russian ecclesiastical art flourished until towards the end of the seventeenth century. Peter the Great's reforms dealt it a fatal blow from which it has not yet recovered, in spite of some recent attempts to bring about its revival.

The recent discovery of the beauty of Russian ikons is characteristic of the stage reached by modern Russian painting. It has just begun to explore the field of its efforts, to appreciate the wealth of suggestion that awaits it. This wealth of suggestion could not have been drawn upon until hand and eye had been trained by Western methods. One may imagine that new discoveries will be made, and that exploration will become effective in the creation of a strong national school of painting, not through slavish imitation of the past, but through fresh suggestion and inspiration drawn from the remains of popular art and from the gradual unfolding of the intricate movement of currents of Byzantine and oriental art across the plain.

In the matter of sculpture Russia has hardly anything to show. In the eighteenth century there were two or three sculptors of ability; the nineteenth century

**Sculpture.** produced hardly a single sculptor whose name is remembered, although at one time the work of Antokolsky, more particularly his Moses and Mephistopheles, enjoyed a considerable reputation. Recently there have been signs of a revival in sculpture, and at least one Russian sculptor, Prince Paulo Trubetsky, has produced work that is appreciated outside Russia. His equestrian statue of Alexander III on the square outside the Nicholas Station in St. Petersburg aroused fierce controversy at the time of its unveiling, and it was even proposed that it should be destroyed. The monument still stands, however, and the powerful bronze figure on the heavy horse is suggestive at

once of the bogatyrs who once roamed over the great plain eager for conquest, and of the sheer force and dominance of the autocracy. The statue has nothing of the smooth and insipid elegance that is agreeable to the official eye, but it is the very embodiment of rude power. The one other fine statue of which St. Petersburg can boast, the equestrian statue of Peter the Great in the Senate Square, is the work of the French sculptor Falconet, and dates from the time of Catherine.