

"Masque of Anarchy" anticipated Tolstoy's non-resistance with a plan of campaign whose principal tactic was to allow yourselves to be mown down by artillery in order to fraternize with the gunners. It is, incidentally, a perfectly practical plan — in the long run.

Were I not resolved to keep politics out of this paper, I could adduce some singular evidence to this effect.

St. Basil's is unquestionably supreme among these monuments. Its likeness to the others is so much more like, its opposition so much more salient, its violations so absolute, and its unity so achieved, beyond theirs. Ivan the Terrible had the eyes of the architect put out, so that he might not make another masterpiece for another emperor.

How curiously ineffective are words to conjure vision! Even poetry can only reproduce an impression, and by no means the cause of the impression.

Here is St. Basil's from the front.

On the extreme left, far back, a column on open arches with a windowed spire; next, a low grey phallus, the gland of grey stripes salient from a green background spiked with red pyramids. Then a lofty phallus, the shaft ornate in red and grey, the gland striped with orange and green in spiral; under it nestles another phallus, its gland covered with flat diamonds of red and green.

Then another, lofty, with a straight stripe of red and green. Now comes the main spire, shaped rather like a wine-bottle, fretted with myriad false arches, adorned in red, green and Naples yellow. Its gland is gold. Then a grey shaft supports a gland trellised with green, yellow diamond pyramids filling the spaces. Last comes a high lingam decorated with false arches, its gland of red and green pyramids set spiral. At the foot is a grey covered balcony; and admission is gained by a quasi-Chinese causeway whose spires are covered with green-grey scales, ribbed with red, white and green. The whole is further ornamented chiefly with bars of red, white, yellow, orange and green in various combinations, and the flat spaces with painted flowers in pots, executed in a style somewhat recalling certain phases of post-impressionism.

There is the northern aspect. So ineffective is it to expose the mechanism of a masterpiece! As one walks round it, round is a correct term, for the ground plan is circular, not angled — new towers spring into view, always fantastically varied, yet never permitting the impression of the whole to alter by a jot.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof"; and yet "in Him is neither variableness nor shadow of turning."

IV.

The Moskwa by night has a curious likeness to the Thames; and St. Saviour's takes on the aspect of St. Paul's. For a second the illusion is complete; then one turns back to the marvellous parapet of the Kremlin, and is again in Asia. One passes into the enchanted garden of Alexander the Third, with its ruins of elder walls, now half hidden by usurping vegetation, always beneath the machicolations of pale orange, crowned by the mighty palace of the Tsar. Moscow has virtue to hallow modernity. The guide-book informs us that such and such was rebuilt in eighteen hundred and something; one is as unmoved in admiration as when one learns that the gargoyles of Notre Dame are Early Victorian. It merely intensifies one's admiration for Early Victoria.

In these gardens monsters play; it is only in keeping. No Pagan dream of centaur, nymph, hermaphrodite, faun, hamadryad, exceeds the soul that laughs in Russian eyes. Who has the key of the garden of Pan? He will find it more useful in Moscow than even in London, where the constant wear of the nerves — London is the City of Interruptions — drives all who would remain themselves to explore strange kingdoms, wherein themselves are lost. With a telephone at one's elbow, one is obliged to fill a minute with the wine of a month. Unnecessary task for Moscow, where the minutes are worth months by their own right divine. What is boredom in the west is bliss in the east. It is the elemental forces of Nature that nurse our hearts. London's comedy and tragedy are so glazed over by hypocrisy that London feeds on lies. In Moscow one is constantly faced by facts. The troughs of sulphuric acid between the double windows, without which one could have no daylight in winter, are undeniable.

In Nice the hotel porter can (and does) telegraph to the papers that his thermometer is 21 degrees C. when there is snow on the ground and a blizzard blowing.

It is this annual lustration of snow that keeps the heart of Moscow pure, even as India is purged by heat and rain. Where Nature always smiles degeneracy soon sets in. Countries not purified by calamity must be washed in blood. This is the merciful and terrible law, and this is the law under which wild beasts prowl unmolested in the garden of the Third Alexander. Those who accept the law of their own being are free within the limits of their destiny. Osiris bore the crook and scourge; the Russian has his trances and his vices — and the knout. I wish I were sure that the Russian — not only his artist — were as sure as I am that the two are but phases of a unity which would have no phases but for an inexplicable optical illusion! However, the artist knows it and the peasant lives it; that must suffice.

Russia is always in extremes: the Café Concert at the Aquarium and the finest ballet in the world on the one hand — the mercury mines on the other. The Tsar on the one hand — the greatest personal freedom in Europe on the other. An Education Act would drown Russia in blood; a Duma is an anachronism. The result is a life simple and moderate, perfectly policed and admirably free. When all is said and done, the only crime is to conspire against a rule which ensures this freedom. The ethics of Russian rule is not to be judged by the convicted sneak-thieves who come to England and pose as political martyrs, or the women who, after being licensed prostitutes for fifteen years in Warsaw, arrive in London with a tale of a *verge flétrie* and a wicked governor-general. Russia is pre-eminently sane, as England is hysterical. A press censor saves one (at least) from the excesses of the Press. In England to-day it is impossible to discover from the newspapers whether a million stalwart men made the welkin ring at Sir Bluster Bragg's meeting, or whether the attendance was limited to an old lady suffering from rheumatism and two jeering boys. Both reports are often enough sent in by the same man.

In Moscow one does not bother one's head about such matters. You can blow ten thousand men to pieces with less fuss than (in England), a draper can get rid of his wife. There is no excitement about the "dramas passionnels" in the papers; every Russian buttons up a hundred Crippens in his blouse — which often enough has not even buttons! No man can esti-