

MOSCOW

Thursday.—They have kept themselves apart from life, and have had to adapt themselves to civilisation with a rush. I have kept myself apart from life, and shall probably adapt myself to reality with just such suddenness.

Only a hundred years ago, and they had torture in their prisons: only a year ago, and I was in the still garden in Dresden, and forced myself, with the sense of personal insult, to read Nietzsche. And the other things too that have stayed with me as questions to be answered! The "And each man kills the thing he loves," for instance.

Moscow explains that. That is, the summer of Moscow explains it. What

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would the winter mean—my winter, for I am of the North, too? I know the sun on the long, spiked icicles hanging from snow-weighted trees; the organ of the moon swelling through the white silence of a zero night. We of the North, we are a race apart.

The colour of mind is the whole of geography, and here you feel the incentive of the sun that stays into the night, the unfelt heat of the stars on the snow. In the North, men long to drag down warmth from the sky.

But we can go from North to South, and vary it with the temper of the East, and be a hundred people, a hundred emotions. We can be heir of all the desire of history, if we only travel enough. People are all the effect of places, not of themselves.

Ivan the Terrible's coffin stands in its

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black box—wooden ugliness on wooden trestles—in one of the churches. I didn't know it was there, yet this thing that would have set every nerve screaming elsewhere merely looked strong here. It was so essentially a coffin that the whole horror was taken away—rough planks painted black, made to hold a dead man. I who have fled in nausea from the mummy room of the British Museum looked at this box stolidly and felt that this was real life, that this was truth.

Death is ugly, inevitable, universal; and we take it as a tragic surprise. It is the flummery we have allowed our minds to build around death and honour and love that makes half, nearly all, of the despair of the world.

But I suppose it would sterilise life if we thought of things as they are; if we watched the stagnant pools in which we grow such lilies.

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There is something maddening in the Russian August sun. Here in Moscow it spreads over all the red and the gold. It makes the colour change and swell with it, and you could imagine genii and incubi and long-taloned spirits of past evils creeping over the ramparts and playing with red-hot pitchforks in the quiver of the oblique light.

The pinnacles are twisted as though seized by giant fingers in a spasm of cruelty; the red walls are open wounds.

It answers to something in our blood; we too were barbarians once. You are shown all the pleasures you do not know, and all the greed of the human animal raises its head to meet it.

I sat down on the balustrade beside Alexander's statue in the Kremlin, to let the place give me its mood. Why should I not live picturesquely and determinedly the life I want? The general public's

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view of life is, after all, only the opinion of the paving-stones of society; and the only attention one should pay them is not to let them find you out; for stones applied unkindly are distinctly painful.

Big people have always entirely followed their own inclinations. Why should one remember the names of people who do what everyone else does? To break a law with success is to be illustrious.

But still, what laws are there for me to break—or what have I the brains to break—without being caught? It takes quite an unusual order of intelligence to be able to rob a bank successfully, for instance. To be what is honest takes no intelligence at all. The majority of people are forced to be honest.

My mind shuddered just a little before the mood of Moscow, before the colouring that tempts the mind to forgotten phases of infinite license, before the blue of the

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river that gathers it all together in the curve of a bruised arm. Its gold globes create another heaven over the city—the heaven of Moscow, where infinite instinct spends its force in eternal warfare . . . where “each man kills the thing he loves.” The light over the sinister roofs could illuminate just such things.

I have no doubt that each man kills the thing he loves—to match his own dying.

My mind is dead to-night, my flesh is grey. Everything that I call a sense seems putrid in this desert of loathsome fact.

The garden for the dinner was so lovely—my blood always swings to lights and the hum of waltzes—and the Russian bands, with their barbaric clamour of the brass, put effervescence in my veins.

But after the eccentricity of the dinner at the Spanish house, the tremour of the

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Spanish dancers, their undulation, the empty sensuality irritated me; for what was the point of all this suggestiveness, before people who hadn't the slightest intention of following out the more or less indicated action? All half-way things make a situation intolerable, and I slipped away at last, and got outside with Grace's maid, to be with propriety again.

The men at the tables in the open garden were in uniform, some were singing, but the chiffon over my face kept me from seeing them very clearly. I did not want to see them clearly; I only wanted the charm of the trees in the stinging air, and to hear the waltzes that crept out from every side, like open arms.

At last, when we had gone down into a silent, lily-bordered path, the sound hushed itself in the trees and I could uncover my face in the darkness.

At that moment my body was tingling

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with the joy of it—the wide radiant stars, the smell of the flowers, the damp earth odour, the flickering memory of the dancing, the sense of my youth and fearlessness, and of all the unpermitted joy before me.

We had come to a gate, and a carriage was waiting. I saw the glitter of a sword, the moon striking on metal buttons, then with a rustle two women came down the path.

The girl was beautiful, there was no doubt about that, but the life was wiped out of her face like breath from a glass.

There was no place for us to turn, and, as she passed us, her dead face went to stone. As they drove away, the man dragged her to him and bent over her.

There was no mistake—even I knew. She was marked from her hat to her feet for what she was. Her skirts had almost touched mine. I felt slimed all over.

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And these are the realities of life, this is being human, this is man and woman! Ah, if I could tear my humanity out of me!

PARIS

October.—Paris is one white, nervous disappointment.

It needs millions, disillusion, and bad temper smeared with an appreciation of Art, to care for Paris. It is the apotheosis of the theatrical. The shape of its streets, its unwalkable squares, the bawdy insistence of its lights, make it a very good resting-place for people who are afraid to rest.

Paris when it rains—autumn rain—and the umbrellas are up, is like a nude statue with a hat on—a hat on and perhaps gloves—gloves with holes in the finger tips.

The huge, treed, white Champs Elysées! A drive only fit for millionaires. Anyone