

Studio-Talk

MOSCOW.—The portrait study reproduced on the next page is one of many done by the well-known Russian painter, Ilya Repine, for a colossal picture of the Imperial Council of State in session. This canvas, which is one of the few official groups painting in Russia, now hangs in the hall where the Council—which has lately been transformed into a Russian House of Lords—holds its sittings. The portrait study, along with many others of



"REMEMBRANCE:"
MONUMENT FOR A GRAVE

BY GYULA DONATH

Russian statesmen, was exhibited at the annual exhibition of the so-called "Peredvizhniki," or Itinerants.

This year's exhibition of the "Soyouz" has been one of the most successful which this society of Russian artists has held, notwithstanding the unfavourable conditions amid which it was organised, owing to the disturbed state of the political atmosphere; a fact which perhaps proves once more that the connection between art and life is not



MONUMENT TO CHIEF
BURGOMASTER KAMMERMAYER

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so direct and obvious as is generally supposed, and that special laws of evolution are operative here.

Portraiture was, on this occasion, more in evidence than usual, its chief representative being V. Seroff, of whose works a portrait of the *tragedienne*, Mme. Féodotova, in old-master style, impressed me most, while his life-size presentation of the celebrated bass singer, Chaliapine, seemed to me to fall short both in conception and execution. A very fine portrait study of this vocalist was shown by K. Korovine, along with a series of Parisian studies of an impressionistic character. Among numerous works of earlier date by K. Somoff, a charming little water-colour portrait of himself formed an attractive feature. Pasternak was represented by a pastel portrait of a lady, full of dash and spirit, and an interesting drawing in colours of Maxim Gorki.

Less interesting were the portraits emanating from St. Petersburg. In spite of great technical ability Kustodieff's large portraits appeared cold and lacking in artistic interest, while L. Bakst's portrait of Daghilieff, a former editor of the "Mir Isskoustva," was far too pretentious to give satisfaction. Bakst was much stronger in his drawings of a young author and authoress, as well as in his ornamental designs.

Of the other St. Petersburg men E. Lanceray who has hitherto devoted himself principally to graphic art, claimed particular attention by his masterly water-colour, *The Empress Elizabeth at Tsarskoye Selo*, an historic *genre* picture in the best sense of the word. A sympathetic note was struck by Dobuzhinski with his little views of St. Petersburg; while Yavlenski's still-life

studies, reminiscent of Cézanne, two fine interiors in the Empire style by Braz, some experiments in colour by Anisfeld, and Mile. Loukovskaya's scenic compositions, all aroused more or less interest. Malyavine showed another of his groups of Russian peasant women in gala attire, but amid the maze of garments blown about by the wind his human figures appear to be mere lifeless dolls. The signal virtuosity of this large canvas does not make amends for its defective logic and artistic earnestness, and it was surprising that the work was purchased for the Tretiakoff Gallery.

Among the Moscow landscapists Igor Grabar attracted attention by the inexhaustible energy



PORTRAIT STUDY

BY ILYA REPINE



“ CHRYSANTHEMUMS ”

BY IGOR GRABAR

with which he follows up the problems of light presented by the northern winter. Especially good was his *View from a Balcony*, as also was his *Chrysanthemums*, here reproduced, in which his treatment of the vases is quite masterly. You and Petrovitcheff were both represented by characteristic exhibits. Quite delightful were some semi-decorative water colours by Borisov-Mousatoff, a young artist who died not long ago—works which showed that prior to his death his art had entered on a new phase. There will be a collective exhibition of his *œuvre* presently, and we shall then have an opportunity to speak of him at greater length. Akin to him in a certain sense are two of the latest phenomena among Russia's youngest generation of artists, Nicholas Miliotti and Paul Kuz-

netzoff, who formed the centre of interest at this year's exhibition of the “Soyouz,” and encountered some adverse criticism. Both of them neglect form almost entirely, and rely exclusively upon colour factors for the expression of their artistic ideas, hence photography is powerless to reproduce the distinctive feature of their work. Miliotti, who has studied in Paris, has much in common with Gaston La Touche. Kuznetzoff, though less cultivated as an artist, is undoubtedly more original. He paints large decorative pictures with symbolic *motifs*—*The Birth of Spring*, *Matutinal Joy*, etc. — in which the weakness of form too often strikes a jarring note, though, on the other hand, their bright colour tones unite to make beautiful and delicate symphonies and give utterance to a wealth of poetic feeling such as we have rarely met with in Russian painting apart from the work of Vrubel. It will be interesting to watch the further development of both these talented young men. P. E.



“ THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH AT TSARSKOYE SELO ”

BY E. LANCERAY