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AMERICAN

NEW YORK CITY

AUG 17 1931

West-East Portraits

By W. B. M'Cormick

IN his twenty-fifth story studio in the Roerich Museum building, on the night before he sailed in the Mauretania for Paris and India, Svetoslav Roerich put the final touches to the last portrait he had completed during the Spring and Summer.

This work is a likeness of Louis L. Horch, president of the Roerich Museum, the canvas combining the realism of portraiture that endures with not a little of the romantic atmosphere enveloping Mr. Horch's association with the museum and with Professor Roerich himself.

The artist has posed his sitter behind a table on which his forearms rest with one slender, nervous hand over the other. At one end of the table stands a statue in gilt brass of a Tibetan figure. At the other end are three ancient books which may represent Far Eastern literature. Behind the sitter's shoulders and head is seen the lower part of one of Professor Nicholas Roerich's Tibetan mountain scenes.

* * *

ALL these accessories are handsome and significant and admirably painted with resonant color. But the chief interest lies in the head and face of Mr. Horch. He looks at the spectator squarely, which may be taken as a symbol of his character, and his interested countenance is lighted by his interested eyes gleaming from behind his spectacles. His blue suit throws up into even higher relief his concern with his job of the moment, being a sympathetic sitter to the artist.

Svetoslav Roerich's work as a portrait painter is known to hundreds of visitors to the Roerich Museum through that extraordinary and moving piece of realism, the portrait of his father which hangs in the entrance hall of the Museum building. That portrait, however, is aided much by Professor Roerich's somewhat Oriental physiognomy and his decidedly Oriental costume. But in the likeness of Mr. Horch this young artist has far surpassed the earlier work since he shows us, in conventional business clothes, the spirit of a man who has put business aside and turned to the cultivation of beauty.

There is half the world round between the atmosphere of this portrait and that of a likeness of a Tibetan lama, the original study for which was made in that country two years since. Here one sees an elderly Tibetan lama in his full canonicals—pointed yellow cap edged with scarlet and with lappets reaching down below the neck, bare arms, and highly colorful robes of deep red and russet yellow. It is vivid with life and decorative in the extreme.

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THE spectator of this private showing may wander back in spirit to New York again when he stands before the portraits of "A Young Woman Composer" and of the better known Natacha Rambova. The composer, who is from New England, is a brunette with a ~~simultaneously handsome~~ little head and she has draped herself in an old Japanese robe of silvery grey, the background being some stuff in a Japanese design of the same general tone as the robe.

Miss Rambova makes a more brilliant figure, seated in three-quarters length in a rich, pale golden robe with a black border. She wears a golden turban of the true Indian mode and around her neck is a band of golden ornament that would be barbaric if it were not so sophisticated. The lovely face gleams amidst all these golden tones with an intelligence and a charm that almost dims these aurefiferous surfaces.

* * *

NOT the least important of all this season's work is a modest little portrait study in profile of the head of a Cossack girl, the original sketch for which was made in Darjeeling. The typically flat-planed face is superbly treated and there emerges out of all its gentleness a sense of devotion and loyalty that is the better part of the Russian character. It has the kind of courage and intelligence on which Russia is depending to carry out her present plan of government.

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UNSCATHELED

two girls who defied their parents and fled to a Brooklyn apartment house.

Left to right the girls, the mother, Mrs. Walsh, and the men, Joseph Simoni, Thomas C. ... and Frank Russo.



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Press Photo.



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