

Life^{*}

By NICHOLAS ROERICH

I Sowing.



AN anyone foresee which sapling will thrive best in the forest and which will be the first to perish? And so with sowing, who can say which will prove to be the best field, when so many factors have to be taken into consideration?

The most experienced gardener cannot always say which tree will produce the finest blossom. A good sower will not complain because he does not always see the result of his work. And so, in matters of culture, it is impossible to say when the sturdiest shoots will appear. Nor can we predict to what extent alteration or dissolution can engender fresh offshoots. I remember that A. A. Golmishev & Kutuzov told us that he did not desire to see his collection housed in a museum. "Let it be dispersed, provided it give new collectors the same pleasure as it gave to me."

He was not only a lover of art who spoke in this way but a poet. He knew the joys of collecting and loved to be creative. He knew that such joy is particularly vivid when it concerns private collections rather than museums. For them it is a matter of real admiration and the creative faculty. Like a poet he felt that every creation has its own destiny. Some are destined to take root in one spot for a long time, others to go touring the world like travellers, giving joy in unexpected places.

We cannot say which joy is the greater nor can we predict where a work of art will have its greatest influence. It may be that the youthful heart will derive its highest inspiration from home, where the routine of life is often lit up with the beauty of real art. Everyone knows how frequently failure has engendered an effort to greater things. It has been said: "There is no

* From the book "LIFE" (in preparation).



fortune to which misfortune has not contributed." We have seen in what unexpected ways fresh creatures can arise. All is in movement. This constant movement which transcends human reason gives rise to new tensions which sharpen our forces and bring about a spirit of creativeness. People do not know what wanderings are in store for them nor can they foresee the roads of the future. Let everything go forward towards new conception.

II. Work in Common.

While an exhibition of my paintings was being held at the Kansas City Museum, a certain Mrs. Holmes had the charming idea of presenting my picture 'Lord of the Night' to the museum, in the name of the children. The plan was adopted and the children responded, since children always like to be given the more serious work of adults.

Appeals were made through the papers, children's parades held, and, on the whole, the scheme proved successful.

It is always a great joy to me to see youth participating in such movements, especially when, as in this instance, they were not forced to do so.

On the contrary, once the idea had been given, children of all ages responded to it spontaneously. There are quite a number of such co-operative movements going on in the world, and the more the better, for we cannot sufficiently attract youth to the idea of working towards a common construction. And, in the last resort, for whom is everything being built? For future generations, for youth itself. If youth be taught to co-operate all over the world, this will make a link with the future. Much has been said about the difference and the misunderstandings which separate the members of different generations.

Senility, however, does not depend upon the generation one belongs to, since there are aged people who are young in spirit, and youngsters who are often quite senile.

The question is not one of age but of thinking processes. The more a person is attracted to work in common, from his early years, the more will he be accustomed to think of the common welfare and to retain a spirit of youth.

Today there are widespread movements in which whole populations show a tendency to collaborate in the direction of public work, and people should not only be admitted to such tasks but should be made to feel that they are collaborators. This sense of collaboration and responsibility will tend to engender a healthy strain of thought, and enable people to discover and rejoice in all that is beautiful.

Encourage co-operation.
