

artists of all domains. Besides the living contact of this art with philosophy, or rather with philosophers, both art and philosophy were themselves vital. Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, Socrates, and all the remarkable thinkers before whom the entire world bowed, were themselves in the deepest sense artists. And was not Pericles, the great leader of his people, a true patron of Beauty and Thought? And what other nation had nine muses, the guardians of all branches of art and knowledge. It is most significant that in all ages and countries the Hellenic art was always esteemed as the highest expression of human genius. And we know that the greatest thinkers of Hellas were in constant touch with Egypt, India and all the cradles of wisdom. This relationship was by no means due to imitation; it arose from a kindred affinity of the Great and Beautiful. We see the brilliant epoch of Ghandara; we know what deep traces Hellas left in Scythian art. Let us remember the Hellenic influence in Egypt, in Asia Minor and throughout Asia. Truly by its inexhaustible convincing vitality, Hellenic Art found reverence and followers everywhere. In academies it was a custom until recently to copy Hellenic classical sculptures, and then to go over to life studies. But I have myself always advised the reverse order, and let Hellenic studies follow after life classes, because only an experienced mind can appreciate the real splendour of the Hellenic art heritage.

I am writing these lines in the Himalayas high above the river Beas, which winds its way below like a silver ribbon. On this very river Alexander the Great halted in his eastward march. Thus even here in the Himalayas, Hellenic memories are awakened. The whole of South Russia also is filled with unfading Hellenic masterpieces. Wherever Hellenic colonies were founded, there art flourishes. It is surely the gift of the Gods, that wherever there are Hellenic traces, there is also a record of Beauty. True greatness is there, where life and art are inseparable. And this union leads to immortality!

June 1939.

LIFE

By NICHOLAS ROERICH

I.—THE SELLING OF SOULS

What misery exists! From all quarters come letters about destructions, persecutions, and various man-made disasters. Throughout these dark reflections can be glimpsed still another evil which stays unmentioned. Perhaps a word about it will not be too tactless and out of place in our age of great civilizations; it is just as well not to say our age of culture!

Under different names, sometimes quite high-sounding ones, there are being carried out evil works to the shame of humanity. People speak very loftily about adjustment of frontiers and about various unions, anything to avoid uttering the word "annexation". In all these ultra-proper conversations no one brings up the point that there is actually going on a bare-faced traffic in human souls.

Right now no one speaks of war. Instead there has been devised the new brazen expression pacification. In this manner the beautiful word peace is involved in a concept of hypocrisy, dissimulation, and cunning. Of course, everyone knows that from changes of frontiers, from annexations, from aggressions and such "pacifications" there results unconcealed traffic in human souls.

Imagine the profound tragedy of a peaceful citizen, who, by "someone's command", is suddenly told that he is now of another nationality, that he must renounce his ancestry and customs, that to save his head he must immediately take on an alien and unaccustomed way of life. He will be told that for certain considerations he has ceased to be himself and that, along with many other things, he has been handed over to some conquering newcomer.

From Nicholas Roerich's book "LIFE" (in preparation).

It will be said that conquests have gone on since time immemorial and that this evil is inevitable. But at the same time past ages will be called barbarism, while the present will be flaunted as a period of civilization and even of culture. Everyone will tell you that formerly the law of the jungle prevailed, but that now under the influence of humanitarian philosophy human nature has been refined and that the more grossly murderous crimes have already become impossible. This is untrue, yet does one not hear such hypocrisy frequently these days? People will pride themselves upon their scientific discoveries and attainments and then like monkeys they pervert these treasures into means of killing, vilification and enslavement.

Men can fly, but whither are they flying? What are the airplanes carrying, and for what are they now building enormous quantities of them? Are they solely for purposes of instruction and development? Have all these machines been hastily built not for profit from killing but for the most humane ends? The proposition has already proved false that humanity would use the mastery of wings for good and for purposes of mutual good-will. Precisely for killing are frantic works going on everywhere. For multiplying torments there are being devised poison gases, bombs, and all sorts of armaments, which can quickly open fire around the world. This is what we have come to!

Hypocrites will say—about whom are you talking? about what savages? Here is where the hypocrites give themselves away. In the first place, what does savage mean? Through ignorance even very cultured thoughts are sometimes called wild and inapplicable to life. Recall, dear hypocrites, whom you have sometimes called savages and before whom you have flaunted your high starched collars. Upon just what scales will you weigh your soul against the soul of him you call a savage? If such scales be found, they will suddenly show you something altogether different from what you take for granted.

Thus, screening yourselves with various crafty fabrications, you have been busy in the traffic of human souls. You say to them, these poor souls; yesterday you were one thing, but today by our decree you become something else. You do not even inquire of him who has been sold into spiritual slavery about his desires or convictions. You will be actual slave-traders, not only in far-off lands but in the midst of regions which according to you are most civilized. This is what we have come to!

But perhaps we exaggerate, perhaps the traffic in souls already belongs to the past? Has not all humanity made a strong concerted declaration about the non-recurrence of former oppression and enslavement? No, mankind has not only not declared its voluntary renunciation of violence; at best it has kept silent, and at worst found hypocritical scientific explanations for its invasions.

At any street accident, some resort to cowardly flight, others are coolly curious, and only a few unique individuals hasten to help. Here we are looking upon continued destructions of irreplaceable treasures, here we are seeing the horror of slaughter, the fatal torments of thousands, yet people remain silent. Fearful, the newspapers do not accept articles about peace, and they say that in time of aggression it is even improper to raise objections. Any protest may anger someone and then the lot of the souls being bartered would be still worse.

Wings, wings, has not man mastered you too soon, and have you not brought infamy and violence instead of enlightenment? Many beautiful and touching books have been written against slavery. If in any gathering you were to ask those present to stand up who advocated slavery, probably not one would arise. Even those who at the moment are actively engaged in the traffic of souls will keep silent with downcast eyes—so shameful is the concept of slavery. Yet is not worse than open slavery the secret traffic in souls, the game played with human skulls?

Many thousand societies have been dedicated to the question of peace. Perhaps among the members of these societies there are owners of armament works. Perhaps some of these members, who talk loudly about peace and good-will on earth, are at the same time not averse to subscribing to a shameful sale of souls. Someone with sharp nail or claw draws on the map new boundaries, precisely following areas of sparse population. But human souls are also being cut away by this nail, the value of the human soul is held in contempt.

Are not all unselfish achievements and scientific discoveries accomplished for the sake of a better future? Certainly not for a future of slave dealing. People speak about evolution about enlightenment, about a new life, yet of course it is impossible to pass on to this new life, bearing a bill of sale for human souls. Oldsters are being sold, then workers in the prime of life, and finally children. This rising generation already realizes that violence has been imposed upon them. In their annals this young generation will write for the future about those terrors which it has witnessed. The child's heart and imagination absorb much.

This is what we have come to! Under hypocritical guises the traffic in human souls goes on. What a great calamity!

February 1, 1939.

II.—LOSSES

In the latest editions of the old masters, there are given in the backs of the books, lists of their works which have disappeared. Some of them are known from engravings, others were copied while still extant, but the originals themselves have apparently vanished without a trace. This could have happened in the many fires and during various periods of vandalism and religious persecution, such as in the time of Savonarola. In fact, there are still being discovered on occasions such "lost" objects, in the most unexpected circumstances. It may be recalled that not long ago an excellent Vermeer was discovered, and an unquestionable Rembrandt was bought at auction in Brussels for a hundred francs. Apart from destructions, old

pictures have frequently been painted over from completely incomprehensible motives. This happened with a picture of Durer and with many outstanding Italian and Netherlands artists. I myself once bought a very good Van der Wayden which had been entirely painted over. Our times should provide still greater surprises, not only with old pictures but also with our own. We know about the loss of "Unkrada", "Battle at Kerzhenets", "Kazan", "Summons", "Campaigns", and many other pictures. It was told that during the war in one Polish castle there were destroyed a great number of paintings, among them six of mine. At the same time, there was found one of my pictures on the isolated island of Saare Maa. In Switzerland there turned up a sketch for "Idols" which had been believed lost a long time ago. Verily the ways of art are inscrutable. It will be remembered how in 1906 in America there were sold eight hundred Russian pictures at a forced sale to satisfy the debts of the Commissioner of the exhibit, Gruenwald. Among them were works of Repin, the brothers Makovsky, Musatov, and many other well known artists. Up until now it has remained completely unknown whither was dispersed all this quantity of works. Of my own there were in this number seventy-five studies of Russian antiquity and the paintings "Meeting of the Elders" and "Pakov". Some of them were sold to a Museum in California, but twenty five items disappeared without any trace. It has been said that they are somewhere in Canada. At one of the casual auctions in London, I chanced to see two pictures of Vereshchagin. It is asked where to look for his entire Indian series? Inscrutable is the fate of art. Eternal are the wanderers.

March 1939.

III.—MANY EXAMPLES

Anatole France writes thus:

Numerous instances could be given; I shall mention only one. Some fifteen years ago, in a volunteers' examination, the Military Board gave the candidates as a piece of dictation an unsigned excerpt, which was quoted in many periodicals and made much fun of, rousing the ridicule of very

cultivated readers. 'Where', they asked, 'did these military fellows dig up such ludicrous phrases?' Yet as a matter of fact they had taken them from a very noble book. This was Michelet, and Michelet at his best.

The wag who laughed loudest was an enthusiastic admirer of Michelet. The passage is an admirable piece of writing, yet to arouse the most admiration, it had to bear the author's name. It is exactly thus with any page written by the hand of man. And on the contrary, a great name excites extravagant praise. Victor Cousin discovered sublimities in Pascal which have since been recognized as copyist's errors. For example he went into ecstasies over "raccourcis d'abime", which is solely the result of erroneous reading. It is difficult to imagine M. Victor Cousin admiring the same expression in the pages of a contemporary. The rhapsodies of a certain Vrain Lucas were favourably received by the Academy of Sciences under the august names of Pascal and Descartes. Ossian seemed the equal of Homer as long as people thought him an ancient bard. He has been neglected since it was learned he originated with Macpherson.

In truth, there are many examples of unfairness. It has happened that a Rembrandt was thrown out of an exhibition and a Corot not allowed to enter. In 1904 I proposed setting up an anonymous exhibition, so as to provide occasion to deliberate about quality. But this idea seemed terrible! Anything might happen. Unknowns might be exalted, while those who had been honored might lose their regalia. No doubt Anatole France many times experienced the conventionality of opinions and well knew all the changes of the tide. Antiquar Smirnov said: "What of the signature? A signature is a matter of thirty copecks." Thus do things come and go. To one it will be advantageous to belittle, to another it will seem useful to exalt. But for all that, "Beauty will save the world."

April 1939.

IV.—GLORY OF HELLAS

London newspapers reported on May 8th the discovery of remarkable finds at Delphi. It is said that the treasures which have been found, are regarded by French and Greek archaeologists as not only the most valuable ever found in Greece, but probably in the whole world. The finds were made by scientists who, on removing some slabs on the sacred road which leads to the Temple of Apollo, discovered a large cellar

containing statues of pure gold and ivory, made in the sixth century B. C. The sculptural treasures had been placed in a well hidden under the sacred road. The upper layer under which the treasures were found was of ashes, which proves that the sculptures were placed there at the time of a great fire. Golden garments for statues were discovered, also many golden fibuli, earrings and plaques with beautifully chiselled animal figures. Continuing excavations in a northerly direction, the archaeologists found another well, also filled with bronze and gold objects. The French archaeologist, Pierre de la Coste-Messalier, states that all treasures found in the wells show definite traces of oriental influence and were probably produced in the Greek colonies in Asia Minor.

There are three remarkable circumstances connected with these discoveries. First, near the ancient and magnificent Temple of Apollo one might expect to discover beautiful finds and this has now been done. Second, there exists a prophecy that at Delphi, at some important date, significant treasures would be found; and they have been found now. And third, the statement of the French archaeologist about Eastern influence is most indicative.

In a large part of India Hellenic influences have been discovered. And now we hear the authoritative news that these new archaeological finds in such a central place as Delphi show Eastern influence. At the same time we should remember that these finds refer to the best period of Hellenic art. Now if we coordinate the Hellenic influence in the East and the Eastern influence in Greece at its best period, we come to a most interesting conclusion. The great Orient was the cradle of Hellenic art, which is equally great, and which laid the foundation for the future apotheosis of art.

"This is for the future", said Sophocles. The same could be said of Hellenic art and philosophy in general. It is very remarkable to observe what elements for the future were embodied in the Hellenic creations of Phidias, Praxiteles, Lysippus, Apelles, and in those of the mighty phalanx of