

Past and Future

By NICHOLAS ROERICH



E were in Switzerland in 1906. A clairvoyant arrived at the hotel where we were staying and there were many who wished to consult her.

'Would you like her to read from a book that has not been opened?' they asked us. E. I. had just received a book from Paris by parcel post, and, without opening the parcel she quoted a page and a line, and the woman, with her eyes shut at once read the sentence, which was evident to all, so soon as the book was opened.

'Where shall we be next year?' we then enquired.

She then described our journey on a small steamboat adding that the people round us were speaking some language which was not French, German or Italian and which she could not understand.

Next year we left quite unexpectedly for Finland.

After this she correctly described the fate of my pictures at the Greenwald exhibition. She also described the rivers of blood which signified the Great War and Revolution and the death of the Emperor as well as the beginning of our institutions in America. She also saw an immense quantity of sheets of paper covered with writing, and here she seems to have foreseen the immense correspondence we were destined to have with all our institutions in different countries.

We also consulted another clairvoyant in Switzerland. Those present thought of certain tasks and taking each of them by the hand she immediately executed what they had imagined. This she did for all she encountered casually, counting the money in pocket books, reading the names on handkerchiefs and pronouncing with a French accent, so that Boris became Bori. She predicted the delivery of certain letters and was able to describe persons who were in the thoughts of those present.

We remember many cases of this sort in Europe, Russia and in the East, and yet people attach little importance to such phenomena, failing to see their significance and so treat them as something merely incidental.

Afterwards, when events have shown how well founded such premonitions were, we regret that we did not give them more attention, and commit them to writing.

Had this been done we should have had written proof of the value of the clairvoyant's art. Many people prefer to think of a clairvoyant as a charlatan or adventurer, in the business sense.

We also recollect the case of an old Hindu, in Agra, who spread out a collection of human and animal figures on a many coloured carpet. He then began to play a very beautiful melody, on a reed instrument, and these figures of warriors, rajahs, bayaderes, tradesmen, elephants and tigers began to move about and execute the most intricate dances.

The effect was very fantastic but one of the onlookers wishing to have an explanation exclaimed: 'I know how it is done now, under each figure runs a connecting thread'. The old man was offended and gathering up his figures went off in silence. It was evident, of course, that the figures could only move on wires which were invisible against the mottled carpet, in fact no one doubted it, but the enchantment was gone. It was a pity, because all such subtle energies require a subtle atmosphere if they are to live in natural harmony and not weigh on those through whom they are manifested.

Those who take part in such experiments are expected to give close attention and not disturb the atmosphere with exclamations. Some people, as if by autosuggestion feel the need to cough, sneeze or laugh and do not realize that their departure can cause harm. They wonder what sort of energies these can be that fear the sound of coughing or disturbance and, in this way, show their complete ignorance of the subtle realms.

Materially minded people often deplore the fact that nothing exceptional ever happens to them, and then conclude that this

is the same with every one, and they usually end up a discussion on this subject with: "Well, let's have a drink."

Being grossly egotistical they will not admit that others can experience what they themselves are unable to detect. They conclude that because they are ignorant, everybody else must be ignorant, and so with much creaking and squeaking the gates are barred with the lock of ignorance.

And so the extraordinary which occurs in everyday life is obliterated by gluttony, ignorance and superstition. If we paid more attention to the past, for which we are all responsible, then we should have more control over its resultant which is the future.

A rational and rapid advance would ensue, the slime of stagnation would be removed and a movement towards a new and more beautiful condition of consciousness would set in.
