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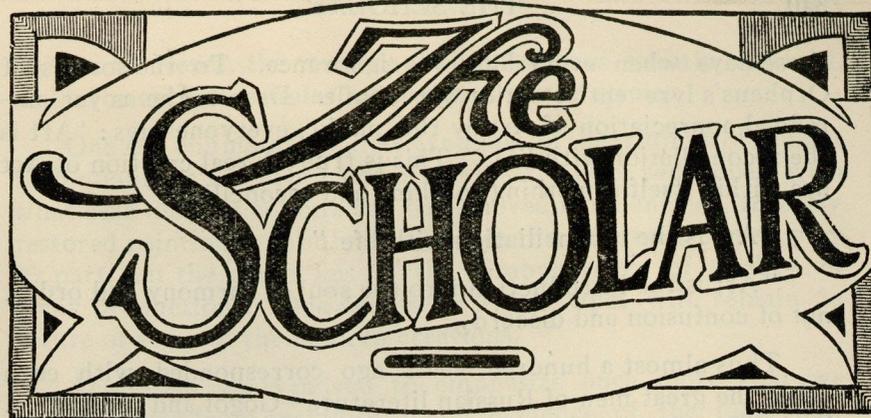
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Real Values

DIARY LEAVES

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH



IN the NĀRADA SILPA SĀSTRA high ordainments about the significance of Art have been given:

“ We shall speak of the manner of construction of the Art Gallery. According to Usinara, the Art Gallery is to be erected in the central part of the city, on a site where four roads cross, in front of palaces and houses or in the centre of the main street ”.

“ Pictures are to be such as to captivate our minds and give joy to our eyes.....They must be of several colours, brilliant with various colour shades.....”

“ Divine Narada says that we shall speak here of the manner of decoration by painting. According to Usinara, painting is for the pleasure of gods, for the satisfaction of the presiding deity of the building and also for beauty ”.

Thus spoke Narada.

And in another age, in other expressions, but similarly uplifting, Leonardo da Vinci praises the great meaning of Art. The same solemn homage we find amidst the Chinese classics, in Japan, in Persia, and everywhere in the world; this is told by the best people in highest terms.

“ Art is not destruction. In Art is contained the seed of the constructiveness, not destruction. This was felt always, even in

those days when everything was ignorance. To the sounds of Orpheus's lyre entire cities were built. Despite the as yet unrefined appreciation of Art by the public, everyone says: 'Art is the reconciliation with life.' This is true. A real creation of Art has within itself something soothing and reconciling."

"Art is the reconciliation with life."

"Art is the introduction into the soul of harmony and order, not of confusion and discord."

Thus almost a hundred years ago corresponded with each other the great men of Russian literature—Gogol and Joukovsky. Both illustrious writers were known for their unusually broad appreciation of art and, therefore, the words quoted above have a never-fading significance. One must only remember how these two great writers have beautifully expressed themselves in the appreciation of the various domains of Art. Only broad thinking and an experienced outlook can come to such enlightening and convincing conclusions.

In the essays and letters of these writers one may find the most touching descriptions of beautiful works of Art, ancient as well as modern. One can always rejoice when in any country the people respond with equal love to both antiquity and modern Art. He, who would show contempt for the past, would only disclose himself as an ignoramus. And in the same light would appear he, who showed no attention to his contemporary searchings.

Truly, it is impossible to lock oneself for ever in grandfather's room. With what indignation one looks at the profanity manifested by those who disparagingly speak of the beloved treasures carried over from the beautiful past ages.

Precisely in limitless art one can study the best observations upon the state of human consciousness. The refinement of consciousness will first of all resound upon all domains of Art. In all branches of Art and craftsmanship a broad consciousness will notice an element of true creativeness. After all, Art is limitless and creation realized or hidden, secret, accomplished or unfinished, penetrates everywhere.

Precisely, Art secures the high quality of every production. To-day the newspapers are laughing that in Pisa a new bridge has just collapsed, whereas the old bridge, constructed six hundred years ago, still stands unharmed. I was also told recently of the similar strength of old Turkish bridges, which withstood even the onslaught of modern artillery fire. In the last earthquake of

India and Nepal, the modern buildings have greatly suffered, while the ancient temples have withstood the strain.

One can enumerate endless examples of the triumph of ancient high quality in the many arts of the past. We remember with what ease modern colours can be removed from ancient, recently restored paintings. And not only does the difference of age play its part, but the cause lies in the disappearance of quality of many productions. One dreads to think what will remain in future of some of the modern creations.

At present one is moved to emphasize once more that we have received from antiquity much evidence of the facts how beautiful is the combination of quality and creativeness. It is most inspiring to witness that quality has made it possible for the great creations to survive long ages. We thank the old masters that their methods of work have stood so long and have given to so many people happiness and new inspiration. But when you think of the paths of protection of cultural treasures, then you meet especially often and come close to the concept of quality. When studying ancient qualities it will be easier for us to plan our modern buildings so that they can withstand the many calamities of the future, not losing their beauty.

On January 14th the "Peiping Chronicle" reported the restoration of old Art monuments. "The Commission for the Protection of Art Treasures in Peiping, which was formed last week, is at present planning the restoration of all artistic monuments of the capital. We understand that the Commission intends the real work of restoration to begin in two months, when funds will become available. These funds have been promised by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Railroads and should come in regularly beginning with the current month".

One must greatly rejoice at this news. When we recently heard about the intention of the Chinese Government to ratify our Pact for the Protection of Artistic Treasures and Monuments, we also rejoiced. China, which has such an infinite number of Art treasures, will, of course, be one of the first to recognize the Pact and to introduce it in life in its own country. The culture of China has created such refined forms, both plastic and philosophical, that of course the heirs of such treasures must be among the first to join the countries who have already ratified the Pact. It is quite proper that the sums allotted for restorations should come from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications, because the monuments of antiquity, in all their charm, will be the best foundation of a country. For the sake of their beauty, traffic will increase along the roads, and because of them

the Minister of Finance will find new convincing formulae. Without exaggeration, the treasures of culture are the stronghold of a nation. The entire upbuilding, all enlightenment, all spiritual inspiration, all happiness and salvation will be born upon the foundations of cultural treasures. At first let us realize and safeguard culture, and then also the designs on bank notes of the country will become attractive. Along the innumerable paths of communication, creativeness will surge forward in all its noble multiformity.

Likewise, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the language of the heart has many times proved in the history of mankind the most convincing and attractive as well as unifying. Not only are the names of Apollonius, Rubens, Velasquez and many others immortalized in Art, but also for their unforgettable advice in the field of statesmanship. Objects of Art themselves have many a time been the best ambassadors, introducing peace and friendship. We already have pointed out that the exchange of Art treasures has even prevented misunderstandings and was ahead of verbal agreements. If the world, according to Plato, is ruled by ideas, then noble seeds of Art will always be that beneficial sowing, which will give the best well-remembered harvest. Therefore, it will not be a commonplace to affirm again and again the wide meaning of Art and the true value of the Beautiful. Thus let us safeguard everything that is beautiful with all the care of our heart.

For the establishment of our Pact for the Protection of Cultural Treasures, first of all one has to acquaint oneself with the history of the origin of the Red Cross. The founder of this noble idea, the famous Swiss philanthropist, Dunant and his self-sacrificing friends for seventeen years have tirelessly knocked at the hearts of mankind, in order to tell of the indeferrability of such a humanitarian project. Everyone should remember the history of the Red Cross, which had so many troubles and difficulties. Likewise, in the question of the protection of Art treasures let us always keep in mind that these great treasures are being destroyed not only during time of war, but also during the manifestation of every human ignorance. Alone, the protection of cultural treasures will awaken many dormant paths of creativeness and entire countries will again remember that therein lies their strength and unconquerable dignity and value.

Let us always remember how beautifully spoke about Art such great men of India as Vivekananda and Tagore.

Said Vivekananda: "Don't you see, I am, above all, a poet"—
"That man cannot be truly religious, who has not the faculty of feeling the beauty and grandeur of Art."—"Non-appreciation of Art is crass ignorance."

Rabindranath Tagore concluded his article, "What is Art" with the words: "In Art the person in us is sending its answer to the Supreme Person, who reveals Himself to us in a world of endless beauty across the lightless world of facts". Who else now could define Art better than this glorious Poet of India!

In the "Leaves of Morya's Garden" we read:

"True Art is the expression of the radiant Spirit.
Through Art thou hast the Light!"