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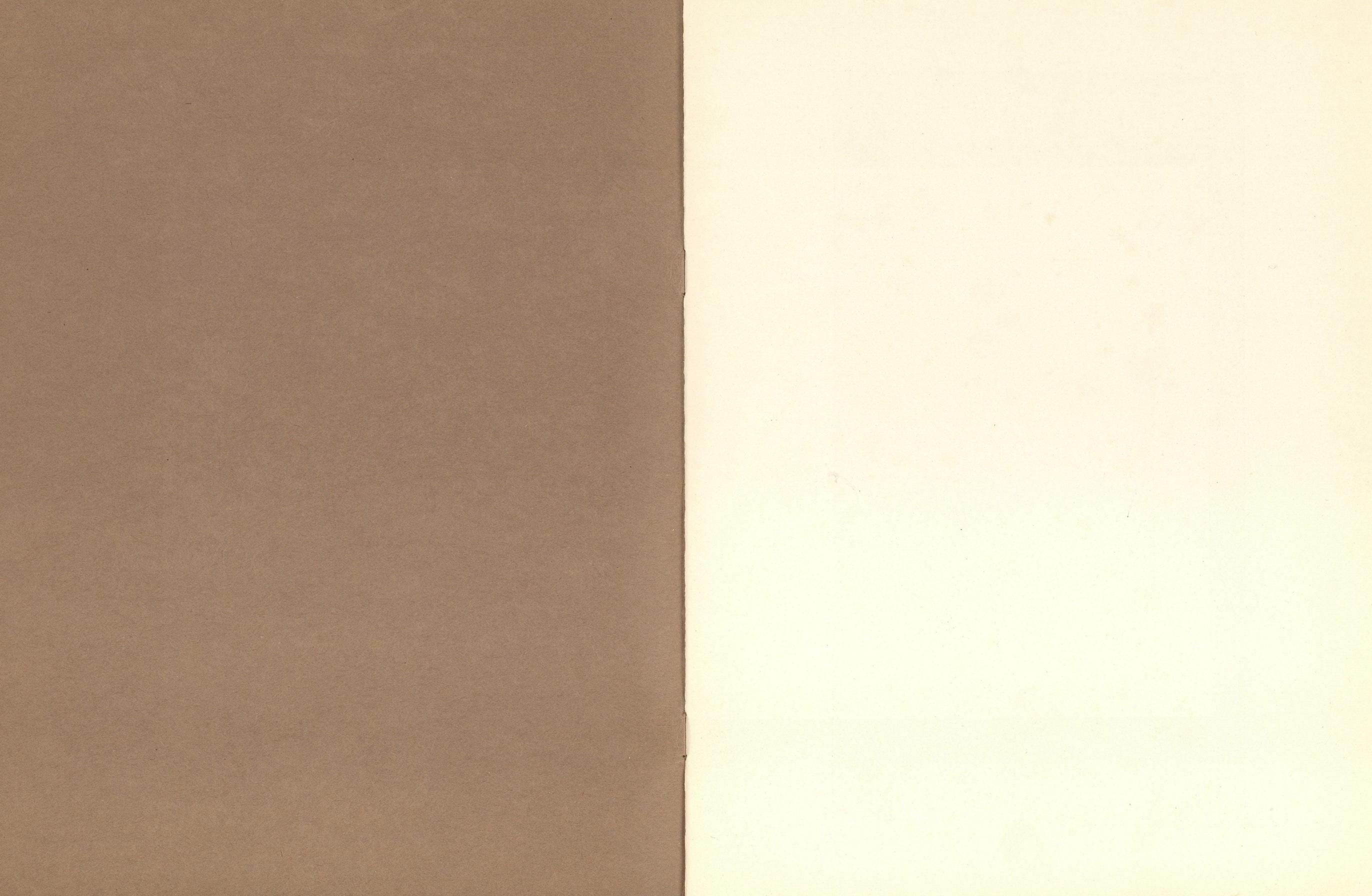
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THE ARCHIVE OF
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"SAINTLY GUESTS"
By the world famous artist
Nicholas Roerich



The Foreword

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RUSH AND ACTIVITY

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

Before my departure, I am happy to address America's youth, which is so eager for achievement. Nevertheless, in this enthusiasm, youth must be cautious to discriminate between rush, which dissipates the forces, and truly creative activity.

It is said that once the great Akbar drew a line and demanded of his wise man, Birbal, that he shorten the line without cutting or erasing from either side. The latter drew a longer line parallel to it and Akbar's line was thereby shortened. Wisdom lies in drawing the longer line.

When one sees in our day the apotheosis of Rush, sometimes we feel helpless to shorten this turmoil, this useless prodigality of forces and of possibilities. And only in imagining a longer line of real activity can we decrease the effervescence of nowadays—the standard of Hurry.

Certainly one must remember: Silence arts; speech gives the impulse to action. Silence compels, speech persuades. The immense and inscrutable processes of the world all perfect themselves within, in a deep and august silence, masked in a noisy and misleading surface of sound. The greatest exertions are made with the breath inheld, the faster the breathing the greater the dissipation of energy. He who in action can cease from breathing—naturally, spontaneously—is the master of the world energy—the energy that

acts and creates throughout the universe.

But there are two kinds of stillness—the helpless stillness of inertia which manifests dissolution and the stillness of assured sovereignty which commands the harmony of life. It is the sovereign stillness which is the calm of the ruler. The more complete the calm the mightier the power, the greater the force in action.

In this calm, true knowledge comes. The thoughts of men are a mesh of truth and falsehood. True perception is marred by false perception; true imagination distorted by false imagination; true memory clouded by false memory. The superficial activity of the mind must cease and a silence succeed the restlessness—then in that calm, in that voiceless stillness, illumination comes upon the mind. And a right knowledge becomes the infallible source of right action.

This true activity, invisible for the eyes of rushing crowds is manifesting itself only in results. And through results one sees with the physical eyes how much longer is the line of Activity compared with that of Rush.

And the day of Rush is the night of Activity. For nothing is created in Rush; perhaps money. But in all history only Croesus was mentioned for his wealth and he even ended his life pitifully.

To be capable during the rush to manifest real activity; to be capable of silence, stillness,

illuminated passivity is to be fit for "Immortality." The "inaction" of power creates, preserves, and destroys. This action is dynamic with the direct, stupendous driving power of a great natural force.

Even the moving wheels at their greatest speed seem unmoving. The harmony of the highest action is not to be distinguished by a physical eye, but only the results are apparent.

The real stillness sometimes is covered by a ripple of talk and some activity without—the ocean with its lively surface of waves. But it has nothing in common with Rush. Rush has some special attribute—for it is always accompanied by vulgarity. You are sure to find during the rush, all aspects of this hideous disease of modern humanity. For what do the best elements of humanity search? For what are spreading revolutions of blood and researches of achievement? The human spirit is fighting in all those diverse battles against vulgarity.

When the crowd becomes a mob, what happens? There spreads the black kingdom of vulgarity. To the doors of vulgarity are rushing the mob. The same miraculous transformation of the crowd into the mob is seen in the train's rush, the meeting rush, in shopping and in the rush of selling, or the rush of disaster. The same Rush we sometimes discern in music, in colors, in line of design, in rhythm of sculpture.

Shall you now ask what is the psychological moment? Everyone now knows the psychological moment when this paroxysm is growing. One aspect of rush is inevitable. The expression of each eye changes. During the sad performances of rush you never perceive a happy face. Rush is proclaiming feverishly, "go, go," and everything obeying this command will hasten away; but the shield of activity is "Come, come," and everything following this call is approaching, multiplying the possibility. People are too busy. They do not wait for a union of souls and in a brief moment something can occur; the best mannered crowd can be converted into a mob losing all discrimination, full of the wildest instincts. We have many explanations of this moment, but the most definite one is that vulgarity is becoming predominant.

The realm of this mysterious power of

vulgarity is immense. The same vulgarity is bewildering the crowds; the same is gilding the frames; the same is curving hymns into "Jazz;" the same is transfiguring athletics into cruelties; the same is manifesting the standard of superficial life. Even the lips are colored alike.

It is as though the human skin were cast off and animals leapt before the astonished eyes. But, nevertheless, take human beings in nature. Take them only away from the rush and real human aspects shall arise again. Like a chemical solution! In the same scientific way, humanity must distinguish from activity.

"All forms of tyranny have their beginnings in kindness" is a saying too true. "All forms of vulgarity have their beginning in compromise." One day the smallest compromise. Another day a small compromise, and then at once a high priest of vulgarity.

This is not a commonplace, not a truism. We must repeat it now, for much of real activity, much of discrimination shall be needed in the near future. And in each movement peoples must distinguish where is the vulgar rush and where eternal activity.

Practical we must always be. Will constant denunciation repel the darkness? Only bring light in—and darkness never was. So only the negative, criticising, discouraging process will not help.

But the first possibility exists of shortening the line of rush with results of the longer one of activity. Only results!

You can never conquer vulgarity through the power of ugliness. In the power of Beauty lies your victory. Verily, only Beauty can overcome vulgarity and stop the wild rush before the gates of that false-gilded realm. And the victory is not far! Everything that we sometimes call "fallen" has it not also "risen"?

When the bitter comes,
We know not what bitterness we had
Encountered had we gone another way.

And when the sweet comes we know
Not how much it has been sweetened
By the bitterness that has gone before.

PETER STIRLING.

"AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN MERELY PLAYERS"

By FRANKLIN H. SARGENT

Instinct and feeling rule the world. They are the educational attributes and the reason for success of the self-made men. All self-made men and all self-made women, so called, and all active and original minds, whether advertising agents, salesmen, or professional people, find these dramatic tonics, instinct and feeling which issue from the great gland of Human Nature and which pass into and are assimilated by the whole human system.

The tonic of the Theatre is extensive and intensive in its stimulation. The Theatre reproduces the problems of life, and if it does not solve them, it mirrors them to us for our entertainment and study. The Theatre is the School-room of Life Study. It is the only school-room where its pupils are encouraged to exercise their emotions, their deeper selves, healthfully and fully. Therefore, it is the best school in the world for auditors as well as for actors.

The actor can (I do not claim he always does) not only gain in his exercise of varied emotions, but his occupation should help improve him in quickness of mind and alertness of body, in rapid absorption of knowledge, of understanding of human nature, the greatest asset for any one, and, of course, in accumulation of vocabulary of words and actions, and their technical perfection and expressional use. We would all learn more rapidly and develop self and self-expression more expeditiously if we made ourselves study as the actor at his best has to study. Unfortunately, the actor is not usually "at his best" but often allows self-indulgence and vanity to overbalance his gain in responsiveness.

When the actor uses not only the theatrical appetizer, but the dramatic tonic as well, he uses his wonderful resources to develop his own personal character, realizing that his sole source of supply is the storage of his own knowledge and experience, and that the height

and depth and breadth of his own nature, of his own soul, is his inspiration and measure in leading up to the standard of a true or great artist and of the ideal man who can be, "all that is, at will"—a man of character as well as a character man. His danger is that he may gain in superficial characterization and lose in depth of personal character through too great interest in and imitation of externals.

We and our fellow actors in the great procession radiate to each other vital influences, and exchange currents from our brain batteries, but the great dramatic and dynamic storage centre of personal character seems to be more or less loosely filled and more or less inactive, often dribbling feeble sympathies merely, and from lack of motive power, weakening the cumulation and discharge of both mental and vital energy. Ours is a world of the commonplace, with just enough drama in it to make it worth our while to live here. Malnutrition of the Soul is more usual than poor feeding of the body or mind.

Where is the use of your muscle and brawn,
Your gifts of speech, the dome of your brow,
Whence thoughts gold-shod emerge and swarm,
Unless you turn, as the soul knows how,
Each earthly gift to an end divine?
Of God's love be your heart the shrine,
An altar of deathless hope;
Where selfless purposes bask and shine
Till they leap into high-born deeds that cope
With low-bred wrong where'er you go.
So step by step you climb the slope
Where stands the great white Christ you know,
And all that shining chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,
Marched upward to his point of bliss."