Attraction
(DIARY LEAVES)
BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

Livingstone could only be taken away from Africa dead, so much did he love this part of the world. Casati was forcibly removed from Africa only in which he felt himself at home. All the remainder of his life, passed in Italy, his native land, he felt unhappy.

There could be enumerated a great number of diverse examples of such as it were incomprehensible attractions to a definite part of the world or even to a definite place. There are Spaniards by blood who cling to Havana or South America. There are Britons who have become for ever attached to Australia. There are Swedes, French, Russians who can breathe only the air of Asia.

In human life it is so difficult to explain attractions, from the loftiest to the most everyday. On the one side we see attraction to the place of one's birth. There are many explanations for this. But how then can we divine an inexplicable over-powering attraction to some far-removed place on the earthly globe. Often people strike out thither as if accidentally. And all at once they find themselves as it were anew in their native setting. Of course no one has expelled them from their birth-place. No offences or crimes have driven them beyond remote seas and mountains. Consequently there must have been some other basis, some other magnet, which compelled them to
strive with the whole heart to a place which no rational process could have counselled.

Such attractions are entirely distinct from the proper desire of youth to set out somewhere, to get away somewhere to spread their wings somewhere in new air. In the hour of such decisions the youthful seeker does not even give a thought as to precisely whither he wishes to go. He knows only calls, perhaps cries of the heart, which draw him to finding out about something. Usually noble characters are to be found in such seekers. They are voluntarily searching for some testing. These first days of independence will for ever remain for them a beacon of stimulation.

In thought we send greeting to one of our American friends, who now, in the twilight years, with especial animation and tenderness recalls his first boat journey as a youth. This wise old man has related to me how, in his turn, he sent his only grandchild on horseback from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic, in order to accustom the ten-year-old to complete independence. Probably somewhere on the marked-off route there was unseen care for the young wayfarer, but for all that he had to carry out his task, left to his own resourcefulness and reliability. Of course travel in America, unusually complex and crowded with movement, can sometimes be full of all sorts of surprises. Besides, there was the stipulation that the young horseman not only preserve his own health, but that he keep his mount in good condition. Doubtless such a trip will remain in his memory as long as he lives.

Likewise we have all read about young people who have rushed off to America in quest of a new life. And in such cases the journey itself drew them, the search for new solutions of life, but for all that, this was not always the discovery of the desired place in which they would like to localize work and life.

Otherwise sounds the story about a five-year-old Tibetan lad who repeatedly and unrestrainably went off to some home of his own. The boy dressed himself as it were for the road. He tied on his back a supply of food and a sacred book, and at a convenient moment he disappeared from the house. When they rushed off to search for him, they found him going along the mountain pathways. They tried to persuade him to return home. They told him that he ought to get back to his own house. But the lad assured them that he was going to precisely his own real home, that the house where he had lived up to that time was not his, and that he must hasten to his real home where he must remain. We passed this place just as the boy had left for the fourth time and we do not know how it ended up.

In any case, this was some sort of irresistible attraction and it is quite possible that if it remained unfulfilled, the little one would wither, as a blossom without moisture. It was amazing to observe that the five-year-old urchin explained so seriously about his real home to which he must go.

Here are Livingstone and Casati and all the countless wayfarers to their real homes, they would wither if they could not succeed in reaching their destination, so clear in their hearts. Besides this circumstance is especially striking, that these aspirants were not seeking only the salubrious conditions of nature, they were not striving for some well-ordered place of abode. On the contrary, their home, their real home involved much hardship. Such a longed-for home was often almost unendurable for their bodies, but for all that their spirits exulted and felt themselves at home.

"Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder."

This adage shows deep insight. In it is emphasized an inner significance which surpasses everything external. If such a wayfarer has found his home, it would be ruinous to tear him away in accordance with some external circumstances. No official advancements, no tempting advantages can compensate a man for the home which he has finally discovered. He need not be made a member of the nation or tribe among which this inexplicable home of his is located. He is attracted thither not so much by
the people as by all the other circumstances of existence. Of course when such is good for a man, it is usually not even possible to explain in words why it is good for him. Sometimes this feeling of well-being arises even under very arduous circumstances.

Precisely likewise, when a man encounters his fellow-wayfarers or his opponents, often he cannot give himself any rational explanation, yet through his eyes and his heart he knows much which cannot be expressed by words. People ought to refer with all care to such attractions. They should grasp them in their very inceptions in order not to extinguish or shatter them by the fettering action of the reason. If such an attraction has awakened in a man, his nature may alter, he may be forever corrupted, but nothing will succeed in expelling from his consciousness that which his heart, his spirit knows.

We also know people who have been permanently wounded. Someone has sometime not admitted them to their recognized home. Or someone or something has deprived them of a discovered fellow-traveller. The ignorant consider such attractions nonsense, preconception, which should be terminated by any means. These ignorant ones never reflect whither, from what cause, this knowledge emanates. But on the other hand it can be seen what an enormous significance for the entire life of a man is produced by the discovery of this his recognized home, by the finding of his recognized home, by the finding of his destined, formerly encountered, fellow-traveller. Even if for some reasons, for some good, the man should be voluntarily separated for a time from his home, his companion, nevertheless all his activity in the course of the temporary separation will proceed under the sign of the achieved realization.

The man has found his home, he has found his companion, he has been fortified by long-established magnets, and thus the more clearly and resonantly can he produce great usefulness for his fellow-man. The heart knows when it is again fitting to make contact with some other homes, and when the hour approaches to inspire some other fellow-travellers. Such straight-knowledge of the heart does not weaken a man, it merely transforms his activity; many ask, whence are such forces, such assurance to be taken? They proceed from realization of the desired home, from the mutual strengthening of the longed-for companion. The family and teachers must deal very carefully with such a manifest attraction. The home may be very near, or it may be beyond mountains and valleys. And the companion will be found when nothing is allowed to obscure the true destined attractions.