"Canimus Surdis"

"Singing to the deaf."
by
Nicholas Roerich,
artist, thinker and pacifist
of international reputation
who has now settled by the
Himalayas.

THE AUTHOR.

"We sing to the deaf!"-sorrowfully exclaims the great Roman poet. Again an avalanche of news! And again about the same, all in one day!

A publishing house in Germany has been suspended. Financial difficulties in scientific circles of Holland. Some economic distress in Bulgaria.

Useful publications discontinued in Calcutta. The Detroit Museum temporarily closed. Some terrifying figures of the unemployed in America. During the last month in Chicago alone thirty eight banks have failed. Some difficulties in Sweden. Failure to realize a beautiful project of children's theatre. Also the impossibility to commemorate a historical anniversary. H. G. Wells, well known for his foresight,
Since a century, there has not been a more vigorous defence of culture than that made by Nicholas Roerich. For generations to come, thinkers of all schools of opinion will remember his words!

urges the necessity of the construction of a new Arc of Noah for the salvation of Culture and civilization. Endless depression! Endless distressful news in letters and newspapers. Everywhere dark forces first of all attack cultural manifestations. It seems as if Culture hinders them to carry on their satanic plans to destroy the world.

Amongst these waves of chaos, one may hear single voices, dreaming that everything will be restored to the old by means of a magic rod. Baldwin advises: "Buy wisely and freely!" The New-York Times has big head-lines: "Trade revival is essential if unemployment situation is to improve!" "Urges normal buying!" A leader advises: "Buy motor cars!" What can be better?

May the position of ten millions of unemployed improve! May joyful buying return! But these calls are like the foam of waves against the rocks. From foam perhaps some useful product can be made! Perhaps, but so far the oceanic waves of disastrous news raise, and thunder furiously against Culture.

Even kind hearted citizens begin to whisper: "Is it the right time to think of Culture? "What good is civilization if we have nothing to eat." Big strong men fight the gigantic waves threatening the crumbling culture. Only read the words of a well-known author written with his heart's blood: "Our personal position is indiscrribably hard. Still we fight with our last efforts, keeping up our trust and vigour and love towards sincere friends. The only advantage of our position is the complete absence of fear of tomorrow, because anyhow it cannot be worse than to-day. But we are exhausted and have become older by ten years. Yet to stand up under the burden of debts for eight years without the possibility to do what is most important, one has to be of steel and oak-like in resistance. The end of the world is nearing!"
We answer this strong and glorious fighter: "On a cross road the passers-by were asked with what they are building the future age? One sneered: "With poison gas!". Another serpent-like hissed: "With submarines!" The third laughed: "By short-selling". The fourth: "With gole". The fifth: "With narcotics". The sixth: "Apres nous le deluge". The seventh: "Through Culture!".

"Is it not a miracle if out of seven passers-by still one remembered of Culture? And not only remembered, but even was not ashamed to pronounce this word, so inconvenient for many. Who knows, perhaps through this one word this passer-by already brought upon himself persecutions.

"But even then it sounds miraculous if amidst the turmoil, on the cross-road still this sacred, inspiring; calling conception was pronounced. My friend thought that only one in a hundred of passers-by will pay respect to the very foundations of life, which created the epochs of renaissance, all joy, all prosperity, all daringness and all achievements.

"Verily if this panacea would be given without toil, not at the edge of the precipice, not on the cross, not while facing the cup of poison, it would not be that precious gem—the very foundation of life. If difficulties are blessed, then verily they are so in the name of Culture, which embodies the Light, the Great Service, unwaveringness of achievement, all beauty and all knowledge.

"If obstacles contain in themselves potential possibilities, then sufferings for the cause of Culture will unfold into the precious silver Lotus within one’s heart. Only not to loose the entrusted Stone and not to spill the Chalice. Infinity is boundless. Not abstractness, but life itself! Nowadays the list of failures is longer than the list of successes because mankind has rejected Culture. Humanity has violated Culture by regarding it as luxury. Nobody will admit that we are now going through normal times. Even bandits, racketeers selfishly understand the anormality of conditions, and apply ingeniously their
ghastly tricks, in order to make the best of this hour of darkness. But there are many young hearts which respond to Light. One must only realize how urgently we must turn to everything cultural, to everything ennobling the taste and all strivings of life. "Although conscious fighters for Culture are few, yet the more thanks and honour deserve those who stand as guardians of the true treasures of mankind. As antennas they sound over the whole world and receive and send calls for upliftment, refinement and constructiveness.

"I remember, when in Mongolia our expedition miraculously escaped a most dangerous situation, a grey-haired Buriat solemnly raised his hand and exclaimed: "Light conquers darkness!". This was not something abstract, not a dream! And the sagacious dweller of the desert understood the reality of the Great Light, he understood that finally darkness was doomed to destruction. Thus those who walk with Light will be victorious in the end, but the wavering ones will be precipitated into the abyss of darkness".

Is it possible that there are so many deaf people?

Sometimes it seems as if the path of Culture and the conditions of life have separated. But if the levers of a machine loose co-ordination, then naturally one cannot expect full speed and one cannot avoid disastrous knocks.

Even the mind of a child understands that enlightenment, education, culture are as fuel to a motor.

The troglodyte threatens: "To hell with Culture, cash first". But because of this conception he is called a troglodyte, and his place is in a cave, but not in the Hall of Culture.

The troglodyte finds even during disaster enough gold to buy himself a bloody spectacle of a bull-fight, of a cock-fight, races, or to delight himself at the sight of the breaking of skulls or dislocation of limbs or in carnal desires. For such entertainments money is always plentiful. There will even be found some hypocritical excuses in
muttering something about physical health. But as soon as we approach the urgent questions of the ennoblement of taste, the question of creativeness and ascension of the spirit, we find the ears and eyes closed. Thus one understands the origin of the old French proverb: “he is especially deaf, who does not want to hear”. The Italian poet who exclaimed: “We sing to the deaf” knew also these deaf ones.

At the same time one also reads news about a new bullet which pierces every armour, of new shields protecting the back in crawling attacks, of new deadly gases and similar “humanitarian” appliances.

On the same pages some voices rise in indignation against fratricide. But the troglodyte roars with triumphant laughter because he thinks that he succeeded in separating the levers of the machine. The saturnine Alberich and Mime hope that their rule is at hand when everything connected with Light will be humiliated and Satan himself, without any trouble will receive all he desires.

The appearing of troglodytes is terrible. Unfortunately it is not exaggerated. Advertisements of evening gowns, festivals, dinners and prize-fights do not hide the misfortunes. Practically in every newspaper one sees some news about curtailing and discontinuation of cultural undertakings.

Thus the troglodytes triumph; they think that their doctrine of gluttony and lust is already coming to rule above everything. As if special internations of light and darkness were being formed. No prize fanfares will deaden this Armageddon.

Is it not the last hour to unite for everyone to whom Culture is not an empty sound? Is it not the last hour to stop the suppression of everything valuable, creative and young?

When you speak of gluttony, lust, speculation, then may be your sincerity will not be questioned, but every attempt to turn to beauty, knowledge, to the meaning of life will be followed by mistrust and suspicion of insincerity. Well, you may say, that the proverb “homo-
homini lupus—one man is a wolf to another” dates not from yesterday and that the moon and the sun are still the same.

It is true, long ago another poet has exclaimed: “In eternal beauty shines the indifferent nature” and “to good and evil we are shamefully indifferent.” But these lines about indifference referred to people, who knew, it would seem, far less than the people of to-day.

At present even nature is not quite indifferent. Even in remote mountains people speak of unusual earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, of sun-spots. And an institute at Nice comments in almost astrological expressions upon the influence of sun-spots on human beings, if one is to believe the latest communications of the “Matin.”

But the present persecution of Culture is not due to sun-spots. And dark spots of irresponsibility on human conscience come by no means from the sun. These spots of irresponsibility are due to darkness, to ignorance.

“Ignorance is the greatest crime”—so it has been ordained by ancient commandments. He who dares to say “to hell with Culture”, is the greatest criminal. He is the seducer of the coming generation, he is the murderer, he is the sower of darkness, he is the suicider.

“We sing to the deaf” sorrowfully exclaims the poet of Italy. But the poet of “Beda, the Preacher” answers with cosmic vigour:

“Silent became the sage, drooping his head.

“But before he had ceased, the Stones from all the world’s ends.

“Thundered: “Amen” in answer”.

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