of Firdausi was being carried out through another gate. The old legend reminds us of the startling belatedness.

If the ratification of our Pact is going to be delayed and pushed about from one secretariat to another, let us beware that during the interval no regrettable events occur. Peter the Great used to say: "Delay is equal to death!"—and no one who understands the significance of cultural treasures can find excuse in saying that the matter is not so urgent. The wild vandals, besides being drunk, do not slumber!

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**Drunken Vandals**

By Nicholas Roerich

What horrible news! Not to be remembered! The headline alone is unbelievable!

"DRUNKEN VANDALS IN THE CITY OF BUDAPEST HAVE DESTROYED AN ANCIENT CHURCH!"

"Budapest, January 10: A revolting crime which ended in the burning down of an ancient church and the murder of a priest took place last night after a peasants' drinking party near Budapest. Completely drunk, several peasants began to bet the most sensational crime they could do in the vicinity of the city. Some one proposed to burn down the church, and every one at once rushed to the place and began to set it afire."

"The priest tried to bring them to their senses, but the desperate drunkards threw him aside with such a force that he fell down and broke his skull. Amidst hysterical shouts, the beast-like vandals set fire to the church and ran away. All efforts of the local fire brigade to put the fire out failed, and in an hour's time the monument of great historical interest was reduced to ashes."

Having read of this contemporary horror, how can one say that the time of Herostrats has passed and that human consciousness has outgrown the animal state? It is noteworthy that this insane brutality was directed precisely against a church.
Likewise of all the paintings in the Louvre, a barbarian chooses to mutilate just a painting of such high spiritual mood—Millet's "Angelus." Of course there may be explanations that every brutality and evil obsession, every criminality, first of all revolt against all truly spiritual strivings. But such an explanation does not in any way justify the horror of these crimes against the most high.

When one repeatedly reads such horrible news, no one can succeed in persuading you that the Pact for the Protection of Cultural Treasures of Humanity is not necessary, or that it is untimely. Let us also not forget that only a few such vandalisms come to light, and that many more remain unreported and sink into the abyss of dark ignorance. Quite recently we heard that some old mutilated icons were found at Shanghai. Again some evil one not only repudiated them, but even spent his energy on sacrilegious mutilation. If these icons were simply useless to him, this evil biped could have simply tried to sell them or get rid of them, but he did not try to do so. His perversity, his obsession demanded an active blasphemy. He would rather spend his last means on the acquisition of tools for this barbaric mutilation than simply give away something, of which he is not in need. There is no question here about something not being needed, here we see a militant savagery.

Is it not time to remind the people urgently of the foundations of culture? Is it not time to affirm the new impulse of respect for the spiritual treasures of humanity, of respect to that by which people perfect themselves?

If we see such callous destruction and in mutilation, then how can one calmly put away decisions in matters which will help to preserve the Sublime and the Beautiful? There are no such self-assured madmen, who would dare to say that everything fares well with the monuments of culture. The Dark Forces, which in many cases, despite their small number appear to be very well organised, openly proclaim the destruction of all temples, the uselessness of museums and the eradication of all Raphaels. When hymns extolling the sweetness of hatred are being composed, should words of Love and Creativeness keep silent? He who advocates hatred cannot belong to Culture!

Rather one must address oneself to the task of constructiveness and watchful protection. From antiquity we have many examples of tragic delays. While we shall still be thinking of the ratification of the Pact for the Protection of Cultural Treasures, the vandals and even drunken ones will act with all precipitateness. May the tragic saying about the death of the great poet Firdausi not repeat itself again. Just before the death of the poet, Sultan Mahmud became enraptured by a beautiful verse from the Shah-Namah and he learned that the verse had been taken from a book by Firdausi dedicated to him and that Firdausi was in poverty. The Sultan gave orders to send to Firdausi a caravan laden with the richest gifts, but when the Sultan's treasures entered the gates of the city, the dead body