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Vol. III March, 1937 No. 2

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NEXT MONTH

OUR APRIL NUMBER

It Contains:

THE SLOPE, MOON-LIGHT, By Prof. Yone Noguchi, Japan.
POLAND AND THE RADIO, By Dr. R. Behari Mathur, Poland.
WRITER IN A CHANGING WORLD, By Upton Sinclair, U.S.A.
EDUCATIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY, By Sohanlal Kapur.
IDOLS AND IDEALS IN EDUCATION, By Sheikh Ittehkar Rasool.

ETC.

It is a feast of epoch-making articles that should not be missed.
Glory to Pushkin, the Greatest Russian Poet

(On the Occasion of the Centenary of his Death.)

By Nicholas Roerich

On February 10th 1837 the greatest Russian poet Pushkin died after receiving a fatal wound in a duel. The name of Pushkin is known all over the world. The sad centenary of his violent death will be reverenced in the whole world by all true lovers of literature. Not only in the immensity vastness of Russia, but in all countries there will be held solemn celebrations, there will be published new editions of his famous works. In Russian and European theatres there will be produced his immortal dramas, in the musical interpretation of the best Russian composers.

The commemorative event will result in a great Day of Russian or rather world culture. The immortal creations of Pushkin, equal to Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Balzac, will for ever remain a vital, inexhaustible source of spiritual enrichment of the present and future generations of humanity. 'Evgeni Onegin,' 'Poltava,' 'The Bronze Rider,' 'The Captain's Daughter,' 'Ruslan and Ludmila,' 'The Queen of Spades' and hundreds of other works of Pushkin will live as precious evidence of radiant thought, as expressions of the feelings of true noble inspiration.

Pushkin's poems, written over a hundred years ago, move the hearts of mankind as deeply now as they did at the time of his contemporaries. Only now has the glory of Pushkin become a truly universal glory. He has expressed the inner life of the country in unprecedented calling artistic images. For Pushkin, the poet, there were no geographical nor historical boundaries. Ancient Hellas, Rome, Italy, Spain and the ancient and new East, all Slavonic thoughts, were reflected by him with same deep comprehension.

No one has before or after Pushkin enriched Russian culture to such an extent as this greatest poet of his motherland. He was the true creator of the Russian literary language. He has conquered for Russian literature a place of honour in world classics. The poems, stories and essays of Pushkin prove the inexhaustible wealth of human expressions. Pushkin was the creator of a magnificent, flexible, expressive Russian literary language. He imbued Russian literature with the spirit of the people, he magnified the language with innumerable words taken from the very depths of folklore treasury. He introduced real poetical gems of national bards. Pushkin's contemporaries used to say about him, that he was ever restless, that his spirit was rebellious and as such he died.

The great Russian critic Belinsky thus defined Pushkin's poetry: "What a style! Antic plasticity and stern simplicity were combined in him with the charming play of romantic rhythm. The entire acoustic wealth, the might of the Russian language were revealed in him in extraordinary perfection; he is delicate, sweet, tender like the murmur of the waves; he is rich as soil, brilliant as lightning, transparent and pure as a crystal, aromatic and fragrant as spring, strong and mighty as the sword in the hand of a hero. Should we want to describe the verse of Pushkin in one word, we would say that it is par excellence, a truly poetic, artful and artistic verse; and this would solve the mystery of the majestic pathos of the entire poetry of Pushkin."

Gorky, usually severe in his judgment,
says of Pushkin: "Pushkin is for Russian literature, what Leonardo da Vinci was for European art. We have before us a great Russian national poet, the creator of poetical tales which charm with their beauty and wit, the author of the first realistic novel 'Eugeny Onegin,' the author of our best historical drama 'Boris Godunov,' a poet — the father of the great Russian literature. In the person of Pushkin we have the example of a writer, who, being imbued with impressions of life, was striving to reflect them in verse and prose, with greatest truth, with utmost realism, and in this he succeeded as a real genius. His creations are a most valuable testimony of a clever, wise and truthful person about customs, habits and conceptions of a certain period — indeed they are the true records of Russian history by a genius."

As befits every great man, Pushkin suffered great injustice from his contemporaries. The great poet was exiled and to a long time there hang upon him the storm, which a work of Art can be judged, and consequently dub everything that repels the few because it has characteristics that are difficult for the average person to appreciate. It always tends towards simplification, that is to say, it only considers the essentials of a form, the stress invaribly laid on the external and technical beauty of the work instead of the beauty of the subject depicted. It is characterised by vitality of excution, pungency and never has the slightest trace either of prettiness or sugariness. It is invariably stylised. Form is never imitated, it is always interpreted. Bad Art, on the other hand, has always been characterised by softness of execution and unpretentiousness, definiteness, effiminacy of treatment and stress on unessential detail. Form is either photographically imitated or stylised in the wrong sense, i.e., 'idealised' in the sense of feeble prettiness (e.g., the work in Europe of Bougeran, Olma Tadima etc., in which a work of Art can be judged, and, therefore, seldom fails to appeal to the few because it has characteristics that are difficult for the average person to appreciate.)

During the short span of his life — 1799-1837 — he, whilst studying historical chronicles, yet remained ever in the defence of the new, carrying in his heart the vision of Russia's great future. When still in the Lyceum, Pushkin already astonished everyone with his sonorous verse and the great

The New Outlook

March, 1937

**People** in our country when speaking of Art are apt to think of it in terms of the various 'Schools'—Bengal, Bombay, Locknor etc., rather than in terms of good Art and bad Art. Oscar Wilde once said, "There are no moral and immoral books, only well written and badly written books." In terms of true Art it matters very little what 'school' or age a work of Art belongs to because just as in all ages there has been a fundamental analogy in the characteristics of good painting and sculpture, so there is a similarity linking the inferior Art of the past to the inferior Art of the present (this includes both Eastern and Western Art). I have heard it stated that one who is only acquainted with Western Art cannot pass judgement on the quality of a work pertaining to Oriental Art and vice versa. This is fallacy, for whoever has artistic sensibility, intuition or knowledge enough to recognise the good in Western Art will, with an infallible instinct, pick out the good in Eastern Art. It is absurd to say that because one is not acquainted with an art, one cannot distinguish the good from the bad specimens of the Bombay and Bengal schools. It is diametrically opposed to the vital and significant stylisation of form that characterises the sculpture and painting of Eflora, Ajanta, Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, early Christian, Impressionist and post-Impressionist Art. But most of all bad art depends for its appeal on the prettiness or the sentimental appeal of the subject treated and, therefore, seldom fails to be popular. There are people who have the illusion that there are no absolute values in Art and believe, therefore, that personal taste is the only standard by which a work of Art can be judged, and consequently dub everything that repels them as bad, with the certitude and intolerance that only ignorance can give.

**Art and Appreciation**

By Miss Amrita Sher-Gil

**Pushkin** is a poet, the father of the great Russian literature. In the person of Pushkin we have the example of a writer, who, being imbued with impressions of life, was striving to reflect them in verse and prose, with greatest truth, with utmost realism, and in this he succeeded as a real genius. His creations are a most valuable testimony of a clever, wise and truthful person about customs, habits and conceptions of a certain period — indeed they are the true records of Russian history by a genius."

Pushkin was not only a real chief and to this society belonged all the fore­

As we see, Pushkin simultaneously proceeded by all creative paths. During the twenty seven years of his literary career, Pushkin became a great poet, a great prosaist, a great dramatist. In his works we have examples of all literary styles. Every new creation of Pushkin was not only a real chief d'oeuvres but became a new chapter of the history of Russian literature. In his immesurable artistic might, in his extraordinary multifacets, in his unusual acalrity of mind are expressed the potentiality and genius of the great nation, in which he was born. Let us remember his self-characteristic poems 'Echo' and the 'Prophet', which are significant as describing the view of the poet upon his mission in life. Let us not attempt to translate them into poetical verse, but try to render the poet's thoughts:

**Echo**

Whether beasts roar in forests deep —

Whether the horn sounds, or thunders storm,

Whether a maiden sings on hillocks far—

To every voice

(Continued on page 128.)

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There are two types of intolerance, however, the two should not be confused, in the one the measure of an inferior work has been taken and in the other the level of a work of Art has not been attained. The one is justified because it is the outcome of experience and knowledge, whilst the other is inexcusable because it is the outcome of ignorance misguided, or bad taste (which is just an obnoxious form of ignorance) asserting itself in the name of taste (which is just an obnoxious form of personal taste)." (Continued from page 126.)

An echo in the empty air
Resounds at once,
Thou hearest to the thunder's roar,
The calls of storm and waves,
To shouts of shepherds
You an answer send,
But you get no response......
This, poet, is your fate!

In the other poem 'Prophet' a six-winged Seraphim appears on the crossroad to a wanderer and, touching his lips and ears, opens to him his prophetic vision. The tremours of heaven and mysteries of earth and sea are revealed to him. The Seraphim tears out his tongue and replaces it with the wisdom of the serpent; for his heart he substitutes a piece of glowing coal.

The supreme law of this little world is liberty, equality and fraternity. No matter where one goes—to a Cafe, to a Gymnasium or to a Theater, one is free to give expression to any thought or feeling, no matter how radical it may be. The cafe is a place where one can buy a newspaper, a book or a painting, or simply relax and enjoy the company of others. The cafe is also a place where one can meet friends, discuss politics or philosophy, or just spend some time alone.

The quarter is pre-eminently a quarter of students. The University of Paris is the largest and most famous university in the world, and it is located in the Quartier Latin. The University of Paris is a symbol of the intellectual freedom and independence that is characteristic of Paris. It is the home of some of the greatest minds in the world, and it is a place where students can learn and grow without fear of censorship or interference.

The quarter what it is today is a result of the spirit of liberty and equality that is characteristic of Paris. It is a place where one can be free to be oneself, to express oneself, and to think for oneself. The quarter is a place of learning and of discovery, and it is a place where one can find the answer to any question.