O QUANTA ALLEGRIA.*

DIARY LEAVES.

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"Where is vast ancient Rome?—and only then he recognizes it, when little by little from all narrow nooks and corners begins to appear ancient Rome—here as an arch, there as a marble cornice built into the wall, there as a discoloured column of porphyry, there as a facade of an evil-smelling fish market place, there as a whole portal in front of a modern church and finally, far away, where the living city ends, as a colossus lifts itself amidst thousand years old ivy, alone and open plains, as the immense Coliseum triumphal arches, remains of endless palaces of Caesars, imperial baths, temples, tombs, scattered over fields; and the foreigner is no longer aware of the narrow streets and lanes, and is completely surrounded by the ancient world: in his memory arise the gigantic images of Caesars; and shouts and acclaims of the ancient crowds resound in his ears."......

Thus narrates a classical description of Rome. And it is just, when an old Italian, recalling the former life, exclaims: "O Quanta Allegria." How many similar exclamations about the colouring, the characteristics, the solemnity of various manifestations of the past can be heard even now! Well wishing and inquiring visitors will always find the rhythm of antiquity, obscure for many, in all its multifority. And again we shall see that the dark pages will be covered with benevolent recollections.

What a wonderful quality of human memory and consciousness, that in the end the good considerations will prevail in us! Truly it is evident that evil is finite, while good is infinite. We can turn to numerous historical examples and check their reflection in human memory. Even the most terrifying becomes solemn. Even the most ferocious wraps itself in patient attention. As if in all imperfections there was some seed, which in its own way gave a positive colouring to them.

We began by mentioning Rome. How many attractive positive traits are pointed out in these descriptive lines, which end in an accord of great beauty! Some other author, more limited, would undoubtedly have spoiled his description with some unnecessary and harmful details. But our artist follows only the fundamental truth. Everything negative and superficial is unnecessary in his broad characterization. Perhaps some one may say that such characterization is not objective. And probably this critic would pile up so many considerations that everything expressive and necessary would be covered with the dust of all kinds of belittlements and smoothing.

For the expression of true solemnity the composer picks out carefully the combinations. Nothing that is small and rattling will bemean his powerful solutions and this integrity will retain that convincingness which gives joy to many centuries.

"When the blue sky came into being and below it came the dark earth, then appeared between them man." Thus speaks an inscription of the eighth century, found on a stone near the river Orchon.

* Written during the Central Asian Expedition now in full swing, at Peiping (China).
One feels in the shortness of this hieroglyph that the virgin steppes are as yet not tilled. The virgin taiga has not yet been desecrated. The depths of the earth are in tact. And in these untouched vastnesses in the entirety of a broad imagination, the great Mongolian, Kurultai, in the year 1206, proclaimed Chingiz Khan as the Emperor of the Universe.

This was possible. This was as natural as the flight of an eagle of the steppes. Just as natural were the messages of Archpriest John to the emperors—rulers of Europe. These writings up till now are preserved in archives and are again diligently studied by searching scientists. It sounds like a fairy tale and at the same time the heart resounds to the past. To many people was ascribed the personality of Archpriest John and the description of his fairy-like country. At times it seems all is but a legend, but again on a shelf in the archives are preserved the messages, are safeguarded the documents of embassies, and somewhere is recorded the beautiful page of life.

Very likely, the true personality of Archpriest John will after all never be known—this leader of a great country, carrying on negotiations with emperors of the world. It does not matter in what way someone may solve this historic problem. One thing remains certain, that something beautiful occupied many minds. And the very subtlety beckoned the possibility of new developments.

Note, that while the saga of Ghessar-Khan, the way to Shambhala and the kingdom of Archpriest John remained within the bounds of legends, at the same time certain searching scientists attentively listened to these elusive calls of antiquity. And again some one, feeling exalted by them, exclaimed: "What joy! What life! What boundlessness!"

An old woman-healer tells the youth about ancient medical compounds. A silvery laughter and jokes interrupt her convinced talk. But the experience of ages has taught the healer calmness: "Laugh, laugh! But go and ask all those whom my herbs have helped." From his early youth Saint Panteleimon commands recognition, as a healer. Over useful and good flowers and herbs the Ayurvedic physician bends down. Every grass of the steppes is full of ancient lore. Is this in a fairy tale? How can it be a fairy tale, when everything is of great benefit?

Likewise the beautiful voices of antiquity built the great saga of life and a valiant Gallahad, not afraid of fieriness, gathers sparks of fire into a design of Eternity. The searcher is not afraid that instead of kingly cities, before him lies only a hilly field. For in every hillock there may be a casket with some message of the Archpriest John or with a ring of Chingiz Khan. When everything seems to have been read in this world, then from the depths of the earth appear complete, new, as yet unread, alphabets. From Harappa in India the attention of the scientist in futile searches directs itself to the Easter Islands and such unusual decisions begin to correspond to as yet undeciphered riddles.

Life with all the overtaxed and burdened contemporaneity again grows up to the simplified hieroglyph, if imagination is yet vivid. What vigilance, what subtlety of thinking, when it is alive with the searches of Truth!

In the same great Rome, the stone head of the Statue of Truth, bit the hands of liars. Truth does not tolerate falsehood. The heart knows wherein lies falsehood. The Heart is the Gate of Truth!