

S. Fosdick

DELPHIAN TEXT



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CHAPTER PROGRAMS

PART FIVE



THE ARCHIVE OF
NICHOLAS
ROERICH
MUSEUM

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PASSING OF THE INDIAN.—HELDNER



THE LOST ATLANTIS.—ROERICH

Most European countries boast of a single art director. Almost every American city has one and these art directors have been in many ways the great pioneers of culture in the western world. Halsey Ives of St. Louis, William M. R. French and Robert B. Harshe of Chicago, George Stevens of Toledo, Clyde Burroughs of Detroit, Robert Whiting of Cleveland, Cornelia B. Sage Quinton of Buffalo, also of San Francisco, William A. Bryan of Los Angeles, Albert Herdle of Rochester, N. W. Fairbanks of Boston, Robinson, Kent and Breck of New York and the inimitable Fox of Brooklyn have conquered the wilderness and set up immortal temples of beauty. The names are legion who deserve laurels for the furtherance of art in America. Nothing short of the six hundred pages of the American Art Annual could mention them all. Chapters could be written about the societies, movements, institutions which have done their magnificent share.

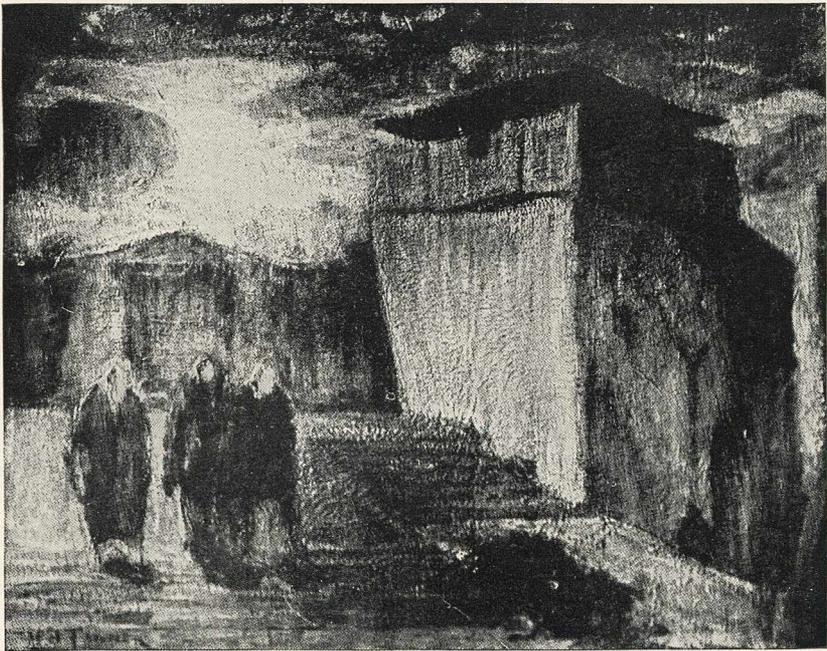
One of the newest institutions, a concept entirely of European inception, thrills the new world with its widespread propaganda and its sane logic for the furtherance of understanding between the nations through the loving work and art production of the people. This is known as the Master Institute which is located in New York, and it is the seat of action for the great Russian master, Prof. Nicholas Roerich,* who is now a citizen of the United States. The chief possessions of the institute are a magnificent twenty-four story art building and the collection of Roerich's paintings. The chief activity of the institute is a remarkable international school of art in this building.

Professor Roerich's great slogan being "Art, the bridge of the nations," every effort of the institute goes to prove this fact. By the arts, the turbulent waters and the dangerous shoals barring amenities between races will be bridged, according to his teachings. In his own life and work there is an undeniable demonstration of this possibility. He organizes a pilgrimage to the heart of mystic India; he goes to the top of Tibet; he lives with the Yogis of Lhasa; he reads the heart of China; and then he writes about it all in a six-year diary called "Altai Himalaya," which is one of the epics of the age. But here we may be

* See pages 718, 721, 723.



KRISHNA.—ROERICH



MOONLIGHT, HEBRON.—TANNER
721

most concerned, not with the philosophy or teachings of this master, but with his painting.

We venture to reproduce three of his most recent works. He paints entirely in tempera-opaque water color upon canvas. Roerich believes that the limited technique and wasted time in oil painting are very detrimental to the development of painting. Tempera waits for no drying; it imposes no tricks upon the craftsman. It is painted directly and may be treated with a freedom but with the precision of a child painting with showcard colors. If well understood, the master declares tempera is chemically far superior to oil. He creates design based almost completely upon world vision, but never does he produce a souvenir of a spot or a snapshot of life. Each picture seems a great symbol, though inspired by some definite experience and in most cases a straight illustration for a diary page in the life of this learned one.

All three of our illustrations are from the recent Asiatic pilgrimage. *Krishna* is doubtless the Himalayas; the *Lost Atlantis* probably Lhasa or some other strange corner of Tibet; *Agni Yoga* perhaps the Pacific Islands off Korea. And yet not for a moment are we inclined to limit them to these particular scenes; neither do we think of them as being academic or objective portrayals. *Krishna* is certainly peace, the eternal spring, earthly blessings, et cetera; *Agni Yoga*, spiritual force, the ethereal rising above the material, the power of thought transcending the limits of the horizon; the *Lost Atlantis* is the stress and storm of life, the destruction of graven images, the throwing down of the golden calf, the anguish of life, the engulfment of man-made worlds, the vanishing of the cities of the past.

Roerich's mastery in presenting these things does not come with Expressionism, Impressionism or Realism. It borrows freely from all schools but bows to none. For deliberate rhythmic design, for complete structure of life unity, could anything be more superbly organized than *Krishna*? The very state of *Agni Yoga*, which is the great second plane of Buddhistic philosophy rising above the sensations and joys of material existence to the first calm of spiritual understanding, is serenely expressed in the calm



PATTY.—GREEN MAN



AGNI YOGA.—ROERICH

world of this picture which, however, was once the seething cauldron of volcanic action. In this one do we feel particularly the meeting of the East and the West in design, tone and color. It is a complete recognition of the masterful beauty of the Japanese print and yet, in the deliberate composition of objective Realism, there is much that fulfills the demands of occidental painting. In this we certainly see East and West meeting on a common understanding before the beauty of eloquent art which knows no class, creed nor race. The *Lost Atlantis* is dynamic in dramatic organization to the full revelation of anguish equal to anything Expressionism has done.

Roerich manipulates his forms, organizes the objects of his pictures with effortless mastery. The utmost ease is expressed in all his drawing, in all his richness of composition. He thinks not only pictorially but ethically, but his philosophy is never ahead of his esthetics. Now more than a thousand canvases by this very remarkable master hang in the Master Institute in New York. It has become one of the show places of America and possibly the most significant contribution to the flowering of art in the West. As Christian Brinton says, "Roerich and the Master Institute are a very lovely thought in a very naughty world." The foundation of the school under Roerich is still too young to be entirely estimated, but it is sending constructive thought and new masteries into the pulsing life of almost every nation through the students who become not only apostles but messengers. The most interesting verity about the movement is its utter ignoring of all propaganda other than the propaganda of beauty.

Possibly the old philosophies are going, possibly man's religious thoughts are crystallizing into new forms. Can it be that in the complete manipulation of the material substances of life into terms that have only to do with the satisfaction of the human soul, man is to attain the millennium? Certainly in a world fraught with jealousies largely inspired by material possessions, a world which is awakening to find scientific mastery placing the abundance of material things within the reach of all, the new comprehension may cause hatreds and envies to vanish from the

earth, inspire men to sing praises on high, to send up prayers of gratitude for the beauty of this earth, to be unrestrainedly grateful for the privilege of interpreting the beauty, truth and loveliness of life in the eloquence of the arts.

Science always paves the way over which esthetic development may ride in the splendor of triumph. Science has done more in the past fifty years than in all the previous twenty-five thousand to master materiality and all its limitations. Why not suppose that a great art eloquence will be forthcoming as a result? The gifts of the world may no longer be measured in material substance. Gratification in life is being understood as attainment through ethereal, emotional, spiritual experiences rather than through physical attainments. The bank balance standard and the buying power are gradually giving way to the standards of self-expression. The worth of a man is no longer alone his bank standing, but his contribution to society, the gift of himself to the world, the outlet of his thoughts and joys, that others may share his life with him. Love and art, art and peace, peace and prosperity, prosperity and racial relationships all go hand in hand.

Strange how many of the prophecies of Judaic saga have come to pass! Somehow, the last and greatest is the only one left to be fulfilled. Is art the medium through which this will be accomplished? Certainly through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, historical traditions have been overthrown, ugly transitional periods forgotten, epochs have come and gone, romanticism has been experienced in its fullness and laid aside, individualism has rocked the traditions to their very foundations. Radical outbursts have sprung from every country, within every circle; the old schools have terminated their service; youth comes into possession of new wonderments and a world mastery heretofore undreamed is within the reach of every movement in society. Business which has to do with supplying the demands of daily life has been carried to climaxes of efficiency which are the most spectacular manifestations of the entire age. In the new vision commerce and education; economical efficiency and life satisfaction, the church



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PART

V