

THE OBSERVER

Aug.15,1948

LONDON

Himalayas: Abode of Light. By Nicholas Roerich. (Marlowe.25s)

In this strange, often bewildering, book Count Roerich uses the Himalayas as the symbol and inspiration of the legends and mysticism of Asia to which he has devoted his life. Parts of it are unintelligible to the general reader when the writer seems to move into an ecstasy and lose himself in a mist of words. However, much the Western mind may ask, "But where does this all get us?" One must accept that to myriads of Orientals these veiled hints and apostrophisings have an overwhelming significance. The core of them is Shambala, the Holy Place (whether earthly or heavenly cannot be said) whence the lamas believe that an omnipotent Teacher will emerge, now very soon, to inaugurate the White Age of Satva Yuga, replacing the Black Age of Kali Yuga in which the world now wallows. Then, too, will return a Stone, token of Light and Wisdom: Solomon, Akbar, and Prester John are said to have held it for a time. The peak of Everest can never be scaled by men because it is reserved for the coming Mother of the World.

We are told, too, of stone doors in the Himalayas guarding secrets which shall be revealed at the appointed time; of the fairy valley of Belovodiye; and of the lamas's supernormal powers, levitation, telepathy and the like. The fascination of the book is as irresistible as the author's paintings and drawings of the Himalayas which express the spirit that breathes even in their very name. It is the more regrettable that a volume so expensively produced should be marred by many misprints and even different spellings of the same name on different pages.