

LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MASTER BUILDING, MARCH 24, 1929

The world-wide interest in the new skyscraper home which the Roerich Museum has erected at Riverside Drive and 1063rd Street, New York, was forcefully demonstrated by the thousands of congratulatory messages which were received by the Museum on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone on March 24, 1929, and the hundreds of distinguished guests who attended the ceremony. Among those who accepted invitations to be present were the representatives of about twenty foreign countries, and several representatives of the leading museums and institutions of learning of the United States.

The exercises preceding the laying of the cornerstone took place in the rotunda which, as the main auditorium of the Roerich Museum, is to be known as the Hall of Nations. The hall was decorated with the flags of all nations and the platform was gay with hundreds of floral tributes which had been sent by friends of the Museum. All seats were taken before the exercises began and late comers filled the rear of the hall and the sidewalk outside.

The honored guests and speakers were received by Mrs. H. Robinson, Mrs. E. J. Bistran, Mrs. Lionel Sutro, Mrs. Sidney Newberger, Mrs. R. Rubinoff, and Mrs. D. E. Grant, and included:

Dr. Christian Brinton, Honorary Advisor, Roerich Museum; Hon. Rafael de Casares, Consal General for Spain; Rev. Jules Chaperon, Representative of the French Government; Dr. A. Colmo, President, Argentine-American Cultural Institute; Mrs. Chester Dale; Hon. D. M. Dow, Commissioner for Australia; Dr. Roman Dylorski, representing the University of Cracow, Poland; Hon. H. Fay, Royal Norwegian Consal General; Hon. Louis E. Felix, Consal General of Chile; His Excellency Orestes Ferraz, Ambassador from Cuba to the United States; Hon. Enrique Guenther, Consal General of Panama; Hon. Andres Gomez, Consal General of Colombia; Dr. Forest Grant, Art Director, New York City High Schools; Miss Frances R. Grant, Vice-President, Roerich Museum; Mr. Louis L. Horeb, President, Roerich Museum; Hon. R. Lisane, Charge d'Affaires, Legation de Haiti; Mr. M. M. Lichtmann, First Vice-President Roerich Museum; Mrs. M. M. Lichtmann, Director, Master Institute of United Arts; Dr. R. V. D. Magoffin, President Archaeological Institute of America; Mr. W. J. Moore, President, American Bond and Mortgage Company; Hon. Mario del Pino, Acting Consal General of Cuba; Hon. P. R. Rincones, Consal General of Venezuela; Dr. Charles Wharton Stork, President of the Society of Friends of the Roerich Museum; Mr. Henry M. Sugarman, Architect; Dr. James Sullivan, Assistant Commissioner for Higher and Professional Education, University of the State of New York; Hon. John Q. Tilson, Congressional Representative of the United States Third District, Connecticut; Mr. Theodore Decker; Hon. T. Tilleston Wells, Royal Consal General of Roumania; Hon. G. R. de Youza, Consal of Ecuador.

At the termination of the addresses, Mr. Horeb carried from the platform the four-hundred-year-old Ruyput casket which was brought from Tibet to be laid in the cornerstone. The casket is of hand-wrought iron with an intricate design elaborately inlaid in gold and silver and is perhaps one of the only caskets of its kind in this country. In the casket were various photographs and other data relating to the history of the Museum.

With a trowel especially engraved for the occasion, the Hon. Mr. Tilson spread the cement on the cornerstone which sealed it into place.

Following the laying of the cornerstone a luncheon was tendered to the Guests of Honor at the Claremont Hotel.

Harvey Wiley Corbett, architect of the Master Building who presided at the meeting opened the program as follows:

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, we are assembled here today to assist in the laying of the cornerstone of this remarkable building as a work of art. As an architect I am always interested in the laying of a cornerstone. I probably would like to assist in the laying of a cornerstone about once a week, but I assure you now that this is an unusual experience for me. This is the first time, in spite of my having attended the laying of cornerstones on many occasions, where I have been asked to say anything. Apparently my clients feel that I talk so much during the progress of the work that they do not want to hear from me at the laying of a cornerstone. On this occasion they have asked me to conduct the proceedings. Perhaps they did so, so that I would not make a speech. But in any case, I feel that this occasion is something like the two small boys who were arguing with each other about the merits of their respective in-laws, and their respective relatives, and one small boy said, "I have got an uncle who is a farmer and he has chickens that lay eggs," and the other one said, "Oh, that's nothing. I have an uncle, and he is a bishop and he lays cornerstones." (Laughter).

Now this operation today, and this ceremony here, is unusual in many respects. In ancient times, cornerstones used to be a very important structural part of the building. But this is a very modern building, and in modern times the cornerstones, like all the other stones of the building, are simply supported by the steel. And I dare say the time will come when instead of laying cornerstones, we will lay a corner column, because the steel really is the basis of the construction of the building. But the ceremony, in connection with the cornerstone, is age-old, and it is of great significance in a building. You see this building nearing completion, and yet today we are setting the cornerstone because in that cornerstone we place records—we make it a ceremony and it symbolizes the important influence for which this building stands.

We will open the proceedings by asking the Rev. Jules Chaperon, representative of the French Government, to address us with a few words of greeting. (Reverend Jules Chaperon. (Applause).)

Rev. JULES CHAPERON: The work of Nicholas Roerich is like the rainbow. We see in it all the colors and all the tints melted together in a sublime harmony. The elements of this ideal splendor were concentrated in the Master's eyes during the years of his artistic formation when he was soaring above centuries and spaces like a royal eagle contemplating in the world the work of the God of Beauty. . . .

I am very happy to affirm before you our deep admiration for a man, already immortal, who has so properly inspired in you such veneration, and who has also hallowed your minds with a deep and durable impress. With this Museum erected in the heart of the "punting city," you perpetuate the memory of an illustrious Master of Art and of Thought. (Applause).

At this point the Chairman read some of the messages received which are printed in full in a separate section of this account, page ().

THE CHAIRMAN: I am next going to ask Dr. James Sullivan, Assistant Commissioner for Higher Education and Professional Education in the University of the State of New York, if he won't express to us a few words of greeting from the University of our beloved State. Dr. James Sullivan. (Applause).

Dr. JAMES SULLIVAN: Mr. Chairman and Ladies and gentlemen: I don't know how good the acoustic properties of this hall in its unfinished state may be. We are not noted for putting up auditoria in this country in which you can hear anything, and certainly not in a building unfinished like this. Here it would seem difficult.

I am not always anxious to come away from Albany to the great city of New York, because it sometimes gets on my nerves. Whenever I come down here, I am always running through my mind that little guide that you have to your city. When I get off at the Grand Central Station, it runs still more rapidly. I was amazed to find out how few New Yorkers know the guide to your own streets, but it is a very simple guide and says:

"Our avenues run north and south,

Our streets run east and west,

Our pedestrians run to and fro,

And then run home to rest." (Laughter).



And that is why I do not like to come to New York. But just at present it is a pleasure and a great pleasure to get out of the muck and the political atmosphere of Albany and come down into this rarified community of purity, beyond any political considerations whatsoever.

It is a pleasure to come here today and a more than ordinary pleasure because we are paying tribute to a man who represents an element in our world civilization today which we know is as a whole sadly lacking. The President of your Museum, whom we had the honor and the pleasure of making a member of the University of the State of New York, told me that it was essential to combine one's remarks strictly to ten minutes, so that in order to keep myself from running on and on like the babbling brook, I am putting before you some considerations in honor of this man who represents internationalism in its most profound sense.

In other words I would say that I am very glad to be privileged to whose honor this Museum is founded. In this day of narrow-minded provincialism in religion and international politics it is a pleasure to pay tribute to the protagonist of international-mindedness in not only all that pertains to art and literature but also to all world affairs.

People in general do not ordinarily distinguish between real patriotism and chauvinism or jingoism. It is the latter which interferes with true internationalism. There is nothing to prevent a man from being a real patriot and still being international-minded. Such a person is Nicholas Roerich. He sees and speaks not in the terms of the chauvinist but in those of a true patriot and also of a true internationalist. He can appreciate the literature and art not only of his own country but can see the fine qualities of literary works and masterpieces of art of peoples not his own.

Before the World War broke out, people of all nations were well on the high road toward international good feeling. At least they were not so inclined, as they have become recently, to intolerance. Within the last decade we have had such an exhibition in this country of the lack of this virtue that we must apologize for our own people.

This is typical of that stung and sleek satisfaction with which we settle down in our chairs and say with that superior condescension toward our Asiatic and African brethren, "After all, they are the white man's burden." When we speak thus it is only too evident that in our own estimation we are a picture of martyrdom and self-sacrifice—ours is one eternal Calvary for the benefit of the rest of mankind. But it is to be noted that our burden never causes us to become enervated. We see that we wax fat on the payment of dividends in rubber, oil, copra, gold, silver and diamonds. Pearls and pence, dollars and cents, are drawn from the sweat of the Oriental and these men then pay for the burden which the white man so unctuously and sanctimoniously advertises that he assumes.

In the name of our religion we have too often tried to stamp out the art, the music, the customs, the institutions and even the language of those whose burden we so ostentatiously bear. To be sure, we have not done this job so violently as Genghis Kahn, but very subtly. In the guise of missionary effort, irritation and sanctification, we ruthlessly suppress everything of a spiritual nature as heathen practice. We have not the breadth of a tolerant mind to appreciate that to these Orientals our pig eating, our fox hunting, our prize fighting, our vivisection, the summary of our church services and our Masonic rites, our ecclesiastical art and our music are just so much the practices of a heathen too.

In our zeal for our own national patriotism we forget every obligation for international friendship and appreciation. It is our way or no way—our peace or no peace. Into the midst of such bigotry, it is well that such a house as you have built be erected. I hope fervently that it will do some good in the way of broadening the American mind, but in view of the occurrences of the last decade or so, have we much hope? What is needed by us probably more than by any other people at this time is some great, crushing shock in the form of adversity. When our boasted prosperity fails us, when we have suffered the misery which other nations have endured, when we have passed along the way of the cross to a real Calvary, we may have some of the humility of the Moral Teacher whom we so honorably follow but whose teachings we virtually flout, daily and hourly.

Then and only then shall we appreciate the art, the music, culture and ethical codes of other peoples. A via Crucis is America's greatest need today. We apotheosize our own moral code and are blissfully ignorant of the fact that other peoples are just as proud of theirs as we are of ours. We condemn Buddha and Confucius without knowing who they were or what they thought.

We set up our missionary houses in other lands to entice children under the guise of athletics and boy scout movements so that at a tender age we may desecrately pierce our special brand of culture into them, but we refuse recognition or run out of town those of other nations who would like a reciprocal right in this country. Not satisfied with prohibiting and restricting ourselves from doing things, we wish to carry our doctrines so as to force the whole world to live like ourselves. We send out our missionaries into foreign lands while in the most narrow and bigoted states of our union we lynch citizens without a trial.

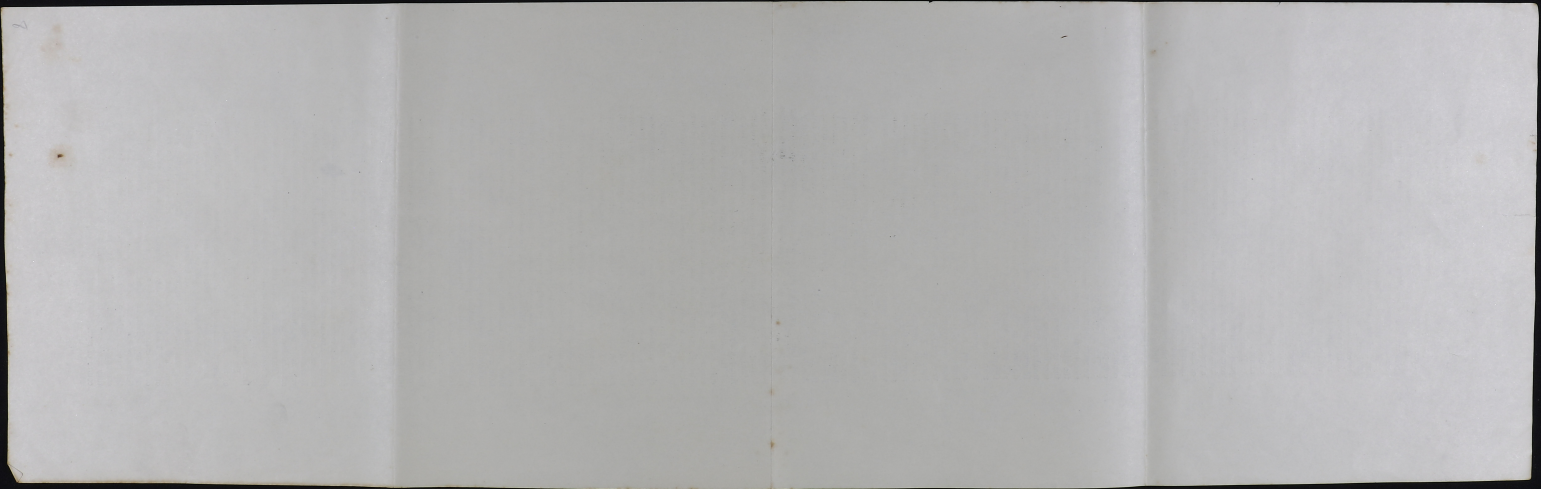
In our narrow-minded attitude we do not grant to others the right to be left alone. In the commercial world we seemingly expect all other nations to receive our films and our products virtually free of restriction while we think that we have a special right to exclude the products of all other nations. To our shame we must acknowledge that we, as a nation, have ruined more industries and caused more poverty and misery in foreign nations by our restrictive tariff than we can possibly accuse others of having done to us. If cannot deceive the world when under the cloak of an almsman we turn to these stricken nations and dispense charity. Having fastened on the economic distress of others it ill befits us to try to lead them to believe that our charitable intentions are inspired by unselfish motives.

Our Department of Agriculture conventionally finds diseases in the lemons of Spain, or fungus growths in the bulbs of Holland, so that they are excluded from our ports. Our Government has only too often assumed the role of a "bogy-bogy," a citizen "fix-it," or a "butter-in," anxious to interfere in the affairs of other nations on the plea that the interests of our citizens are involved. Essentially intolerant in our own affairs, as is shown by the activities of such an organization as the Ku Klux Klan, we carry that intolerance into our relations with other peoples. We presume to put other people's houses into order before we clean up our own.

Is it a wonder, therefore, that we discover a feeling of growing antipathy to our country because of our intolerant attitude in these matters? Our only hope is that more men of the type of Nicholas Roerich will come here to teach us a sweet reasonableness and convert us to the point of view of respect for the actions of other nations, art and literature of all the people of the world. (Applause).

TUN CHAMKIAN: I am going to ask Dr. A. Colin, President of the Society for the Promotion of Argentine and American Culture, to say a few words of greeting from Argentina. I present to you Dr. Colin. (Applause).

Dr. A. COLIN: By coming to this laying of the cornerstone of the building where the Master Institute of United Arts and other splendid creations of Nicholas Roerich will have their home, I come with deep reverence, with the union we sacrifice to that to a Temple of Art, to a spiritual Alcazar where we sacrifice to that which is the most intimate, disinterested and lofty in human feelings and conscience—Beauty. Nobody can forget that the greatest historical treasures of our world, the treasures that yield to no other men from every climate, are not the wars of conquest, the conquest of men from every organization, but the artistic manifestations of more or political organizations, and of many other cultures. Those are Greece, of Italy, of Japan, and of many other cultures. Those are the treasures that do not feel the action of Time, that last for centuries. Those are the treasures preclusively immortal, because they speak and go to the heart and intelligence of men in the long course of ages.



I come in a dual character, first, as President of the "Argentine American Cultural Institute," founded in my country one year ago for the betterment of cultural intercourse between Argentina and the States; and specifically among other purposes, for the mutual interchange of expressions of Art. Secondly, as a representative of Argentina, as a member of a people whose, through circumstances of race, tradition, taste and collective education, Art is highly honored and is capable of manifestations of which we begin to feel proud.

And I come with great pleasure. This act affords me the opportunity to pay due homage to so great an artist as Mr. Roerich. When I say "great artist," I do mean a great deal. In my opinion a true artist is always a broad and synthetic spirit. The artist who knows only his speciality may be a good artist but never will rank as a creator, as a man that "makes an epoch." Recall, for instance, Dante, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Goethe, Wagner or Victor Hugo. On their paths follows Mr. Roerich. He is known as a painter, but he is more than a painter. He is also a man of science, an educator and a philosopher. Even when he paints, he goes far beyond. He speaks, he tells something, he enlightens a problem, he evokes recollections and feelings, he obliges us to think with him and in interest the attitudes and meanings of his figures, which are no mere figures of humanity but symbols and part of a poem.

This is the inspiration of his Master Institute of United Arts. Like Beauty, Art is only one. Surely it presents itself in very different manifestations, but all of them look toward a common end. Consequently, to say the various arts are interdependent and must live unitedly, is the obvious affirmation. And when we find, as it happens in Mr. Roerich's general work, that above all this art is correlated with science and religion, in order to cover all spiritual grounds and horizons of life, it is no wonder we see in Roerich's paintings new forms of expression and we discover in him something of a mystic who, more than once unconsciously and guided by deep intuitions, is to accomplish a mission and is paving the way for others to follow in his tracks.

I come also with faith and confidence. Temples of art and beauty are needed everywhere, and the people of this great country have realized it long since. They know the main fact; intellectual conditions are not apace with the standards of economic and even political and social organization. And men such as Poe, Whitier, Whitman, Sargent, Boghum, or Emerson, do not imply and produce that collective fact, that stupendous fact, represented by men of action like Carnegie, Rockefeller, Harriman, Gould, Hears, Armour, Pierpont Morgan, Ford, Schwab, Fox and hundreds of others. That is why they are, after many decades, so strenuously engaged in a large and strong campaign, for general and higher education. There lies the reason of their academies, museums, associations, of every intellectual and artistic kind, and even of their independent and revolutionary groups. Better than that, among people devoted to financial activities, which would seem so far from art, is easy to find, as in the case of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, a sound and vivid taste for spiritual things and aims.

It is not difficult then to ask for all the blessings on the cornerstone of this magnificent future building and to predict what will become this monument to which Mr. Roerich's name is attached. There are at least two mighty forces which speak in their behalf. On one side, Mr. Roerich's personal impulse, example and name, seconded and fostered by the courageous and capable men of the Museum's directorate. On the other, the care and help of a people who is thirsty and longing for art and its supreme manifestation of beauty. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: The Consul General of Chile, the Honorable Luis E. Feltz, will bring us a few words of greeting from his country. (Applause.)

Hon. Luis Feltz: I consider it a great honor to have been invited to participate in the laying of the cornerstone of the new Roerich Museum, and to have been asked to say a few words on this occasion.

But aside from the honor bestowed on me, I must confess that for me, as a citizen and a representative of Chile, my participation is a true pleasure.

Chile was one of the first countries—if not the first—of South America to give arts and sciences the eminent position they occupy among human activities, and the Chilean museums of art and natural history were the first to be established on a solid basis, and today continue in a state of lasting and fruitful progress. Chile was also the first country to break ancestral traditions, and to secure the services of foreign scientists and artists as teachers for the future generations. And so successful was its efforts that many of its pupils were and are today, high esteemed teachers, recipients of high honors in Paris and Rome and other centers of learning, and honored too, by academies and universities.

Were I to cite the names of the pioneers in Arts and Sciences, some of whom later achieved international fame, I would be obliged to take up much of the time that you can better employ by listening to speakers who know more than I. But, permit me to add that those teachers, doing as Roerich did in the United States, taught more than the mere secrets of their professions, leaving in Chile a great lesson that the world has now accepted. They taught that sciences, arts and letters are a heritage of the world and not of only one nation. They recognize no frontiers, and when attempts are made to enclose them within such, they over-leap them, as they passed over the walls of China centuries ago and spread their perfumes over the entire earth.

It seems that the Directors of this Museum, which has passed from modest beginnings to well-deserved prominence, have thought as I have, in giving this event an international character, inviting distinguished guests from all nations.

The Directors have remembered, perhaps, that men hold to opinions and customs that are different, sometimes opposed, and that we speak languages that are unlike; that when we try to express ourselves in a foreign tongue, we do it badly, that words fail us, our pronunciation impedes us. But when a musician produces a sublime song, an artist takes his brush, or a sculptor his hammer and chisel, and paints on his canvas a marvelous landscape or creates from the block of inert marble a figure full of life, we do not need language to explain it, be we Americans, Europeans, Asiatics, Africans or Oceanians; all of us understand that a new work of art has been born, and our fantasy clothes the naked figure, fills with thought its ample forehead of stone, traverses in ecstasy the flowered paths of the landscape, or is carried by the strains of the music to heights beyond the horizon limited by space.

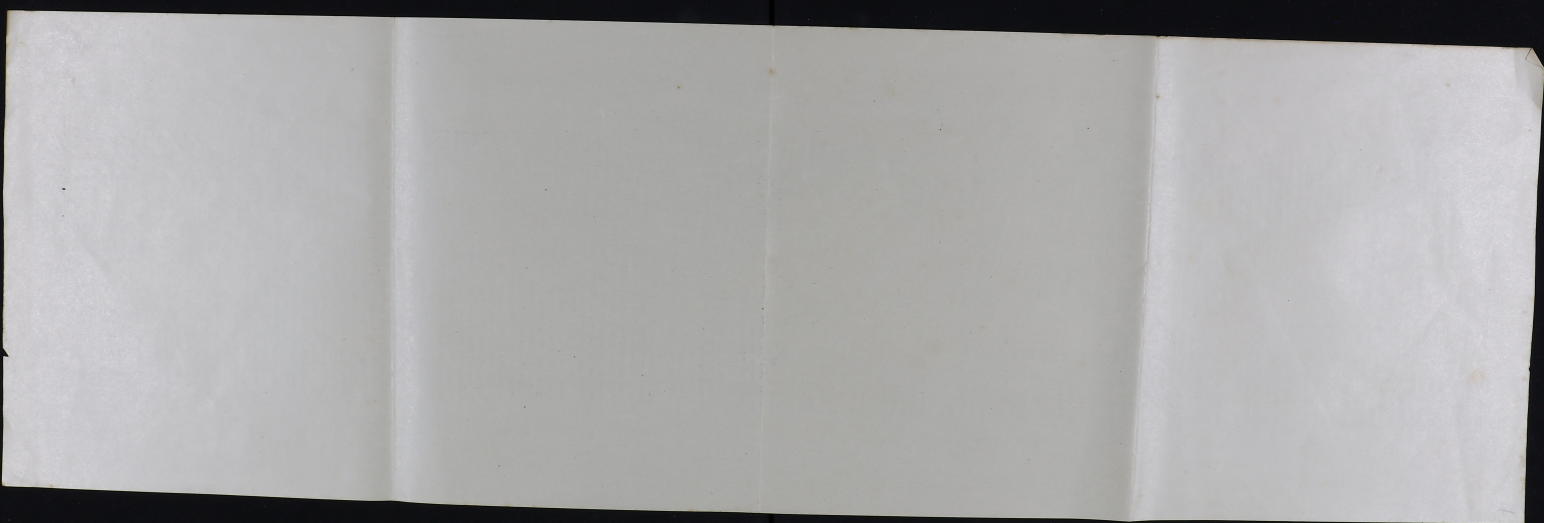
I gladly take part, consequently, in this ceremony, and in this homage to the creation of Roerich, and I am pleased to consider it as a compliment to humanity, and as one of the most beautiful monuments raised to peace, friendship harmony, and the mutual understanding of the all nations—to Art, considered the only and sublime universal language.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take great pleasure in introducing to you, Hon. María del Pino, who represents the Cuban Government as Consul General of Cuba in New York City. (Applause.)

Hon. María del Pino: I have been instructed by my Government to be present at this meeting, in which His Excellency the President of Cuba is deeply interested, and it gives me pleasure to comply with his request.

I am encouraged by the reflection that in my country we have a veritable cult of whatever pertains to fraternity and love amongst nations, and that Cuba has always shown herself eager to uphold ideals of fraternity between all races and all creeds, ideals by which men are being guided to lives of greater spiritual depth, of more thorough progressiveness; to lives more consonant with the teachings of those apostles who have preached the brotherhood of man.

You are acquainted with the transcendent works of Professor Roerich; you are familiar with his versatility, his originality in each field to which he has applied his knowledge; for the fruit of his genius has overflowed and spread through the continents. Through the multiplicity of modern evils he has decried the cardinal fault and has preached for its correction. He has preached with his voice, with his pen, with his palette; out of the martyrdom of his genius he has borrowed here a light and there another, and has set them glowing where they were needed. Each of his assaults against evil and disruption of human ties is like the saints that drift through his paintings beside still rivers, or the great walls of a city; and his mission is to enlighten, like the skies



of his paintings—those skies, striding with their impalpable clouds over wind-swept plains, that pluck the flatness out of his canvases and make the fabric vanish in actuality. He is a man passionately in love with his art. We do not know whether to admire him more for the fertile diversity of his art (an art simple and suggestive yet always sublime) or for the potent spirit which carries him to the consummation of his great ideas.

However, it is not my purpose to eulogize Professor Roerich; for me to do so would be unnecessary and presumptuous, in the light of his formidable genius and the recognition he has already attained. There is nothing left for me save to express the sincere good wishes of President Melhado, of Cuba, and of myself, for we feel in every fibre that the laying of this cornerstone inaugurates resplendent days of glory for the imperishable art of Professor Roerich—Professor Roerich, symbol of altruism, of stupendous creative works; Professor Roerich, apostle of all ideals related to progress and fraternity and love amongst men.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are greatly honored today by having with us to assist materially in the laying of this cornerstone, a man of national and international reputation in the political world. The Hon. John Q. Tilson, Congressional Representative of the United States Third District, Connecticut, and Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, who will speak to us. I present to you the Honorable John Q. Tilson. (Applause.)

HON. JOHN Q. TILSON: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: The house to which I belong in Washington does most of its business under what we know as the five-minute rule, so that when you have a member of that body speaking to you, you need be fearful as some people are, when a representative from the Senate, where there is no time limit, is to speak to you. (Laughter.)

After hearing from the Chairman's list of distinguished guests who have been invited, and the many excuses coming from people in Washington, stating that they were far too busy to attend this occasion, I wondered somewhat why it was so, until Dr. Sullivan took the stand and told you all of the shortcomings of this country, including our Government. Then I knew what they were remaining there for: to fix up all these failings that he was talking about. (Laughter.)

One of the men who is absent was not too busy to come, because he was never too busy to come back to this particular part of New York. I refer to Congressman Sol Bloom, from this particular district. He sits opposite me in the major hall of the House of Representatives, which divides the two parties. But I often sit very close to him and we have become personal friends, and I am very sorry that the fashionable malady which has affected so many persons throughout the country this year has rendered him unable to be here on this occasion. I am glad to be in his district and to see the splendid men and women who are here and to see this wonderful monument which is to stand throughout the years in his district.

It has been somewhat of a puzzle to me why I was invited to take part in these exercises as it is a signal honor to be invited on an occasion like this. I, as a humble neophyte, have always from a distance, as it were, admired art, but I have always felt that my somewhat untrained mind was not fully capable of appreciating all its wonderful meaning. While I have been able in a modest way to enjoy art, sculpture, painting, or music, nevertheless I have always felt that I was only touching the hem of the garment that clothes that great field of our life.

Sometimes in our work in Congress, we are confronted with questions touching on art in one way or another. Sometimes it is only as to the location of some monument or other work of art. Sometimes it has to do with appropriate limitations to be applied to architecture in the construction of buildings, public and otherwise, in the National Capital over which Congress has control. I have always felt that all these matters should be submitted to and controlled by the advice of the best experts obtainable on those subjects, and so we have appointed fine arts commissions, building and planning commissions, and others. And although their efforts may not have been the wisest, nor the most far-sighted, nevertheless the fact that such efforts have been made by our Government, indicates the respect and the reverence and the awe, I might say, that we feel toward art.

From the very earliest times of which we have any historical trace whatever, men have been inclined toward the esthetic. In the rude dwellings of the cave-men, we find that their walls carry examples of efforts in the direction of portraying the beautiful. And in the mounds and tombs of races long since forgotten, we find evidences of the aspiration to express the beautiful. Down through the ages we must admit that ignorance and superstition and intolerance, such as Dr. Sullivan has so accurately and emphatically described, have played havoc with art. But always we have found that those occasions were transient and temporary, and they were always in the end superseded by a devoted civilization which in a more qualified form attempted to restore the works of art.

This, too, is shown by this building which is being created here. We are laying a cornerstone today and as happens in this topsyturvy world, we begin at the top. Although we are laying the cornerstone, the building is nearly completed. May this building, which has been created and which I hope may stand for many years to come, house and perpetuate the works of art, created by great genius, such as he whose name it is to bear, and other works yet to be produced.

It is not only a monument to Roerich, but it is a monument in a nobler and a higher sense to the true and the beautiful. Nicholas Roerich needs no monument. His works are his monument and these will live when the steel supports of this building shall have rusted away and every stone of it crumbled back to dust, because Roerich lives in and through the work that he has produced.

I like to think of the philosophy of this great artist—because he is a philosopher, as well as an artist. I like to think of that beautiful illustration he gives of entrance to a Russian village. He says that the best entrance to the village, the best counterpoint, is a song, and the more pleasing the song, the better the reception. And if further guarantee is necessary, if a certificate is necessary, then a drawing or a painting, or a picture of some kind is the best certificate of entrance to those villages. Roerich is kind enough, after his travels, which are broad and expansive, to say the same things about our people, because in our people whether thoroughly trained or not, he found the same innate sense of the beautiful.

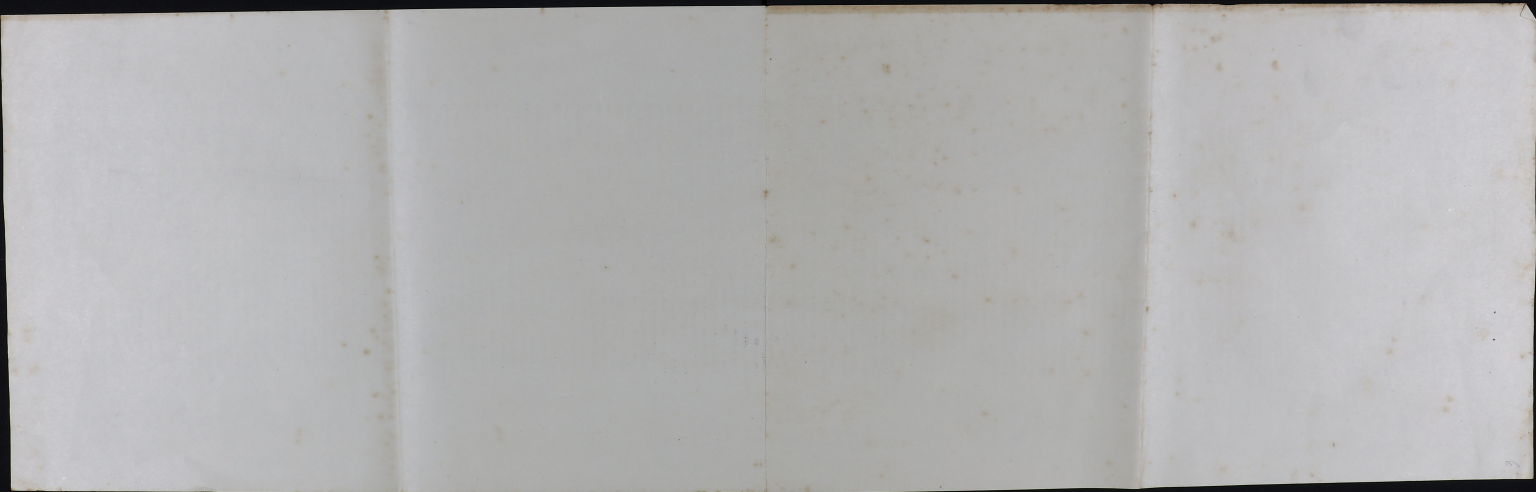
I like to think of what is going to be the result of this building and what it is to contain. A Master Institute of United Arts. Think of it, instead of all branches of art going on their separate ways and perhaps antagonizing each other, to be brought together, so that each can support the other, so that sculpture, painting and music can all come together, whatever may be their branches!

This is a monument supremely worthwhile. Untrained in art as I am and as one who can admire art only at a distance, and imperfectly at that, I am glad to join in congratulation to those people who have given so much that this monument might be erected. No one can participate in exercises of this sort without feeling the debt of gratitude which people all over the country owe to such persons; not only to the great genius whose name it bears, but to the officers and members of the Society of the Friends of this Museum, who give of themselves and their substance so liberally, that a monument like this may arise and continue to exist. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is time now that we had at least a word from some of those who have been on the scene in creating this great building. You know surely that none of this work is ever done by men alone, but that women have an equal, and in this case, even a greater part in the work. So I am going to ask that the Vice President of the Roerich Museum, Miss Frances R. Grant speak to you. (Applause.)

MISS FRANCES R. GRANT: Ladies and gentlemen, and Honored Guests: There is a tradition in the East that the first community of humanity was built up around the stone from which man struck the first spark of fire, the first flint. I think that today we are re-living and re-creating this tradition, because we are not only laying a cornerstone here today, but we are striking the first spark of fire from that stone. Around this flaming stone, we hope that there may grow a community of achievement which shall contribute to the larger welfare of humanity.

It seems to me especially fitting that we are meeting on this occasion, within the walls of this hall. Because when this building was first conceived, and before the idea had even found itself



crystallized in mortar and brick, we had planned that this auditorium should be called the Hall of the Nations, and that this auditorium should be a haven where all people should bring their best yield and where everyone should be united in a great creative labor. Let us who are met here today and who represent, either by birth or by heritage, almost all of the peoples of the earth, today also dedicate this hall as the Hall of the Nations, as a great creative hearth of humanity.

And now for the cornerstone. It is true that now the cornerstone is only a symbol, but it is therefore perhaps the more potent. Because the laying of the cornerstone is like the kindling of a great fire in the night; to this fire all the night travelers come for shelter and for strength. Truly we are laying the cornerstone of this building, and we are laying the stone for that larger edifice, which will reach out beyond the physical walls of this building to all the world.

Then let us who are here present today, re-dedicate ourselves and this building to the causes which we have at heart. Let us dedicate it to the masters of all times whose great services have been sacrificed to human progress and human welfare. Let us dedicate it to Nicholas Roerich, whose spirit so permeates the foundation of this building, and whose life has been a living example of human aspirations and human achievement. Let us dedicate it to all men and to all people in the name of beauty. And from out this building may there flow a great stream of benevolence, and may it result in a sweeter humanity, and in a better relationship among men. And in that new renaissance and that new dawn, which we all feel is to be, may this building and that spirit that is within the building, serve the cause of beauty for humanity, the beauty which opens for all men, all sacred gates. (Applause).

THE CHAIRMAN: We have three more speakers. I am going to ask them to take a note from the remarks of Miss Grant who was so delightfully short and to the point (laughter) and ask them if they won't confine their remarks in the same way and take as little time as possible, because the hour is getting late.

The next speaker is an Honorary Advisor of the Roerich Museum, an art connoisseur and critic of national and international reputation. It gives me great pleasure to call upon Dr. Christian Brinton. (Applause).

DR. CHRISTIAN BRINTON: Friends of the Roerich Museum: I want to assure you that I will have no difficulty in fulfilling for you the wise admonition of our Chairman, Mr. Corbett.

I am in a sense the biographer and the cataloguer of Professor Roerich. But I am not going to relate to you his biography, and I think that I could not catalogue all his works. I would like to have you go back for a few moments, back a little bit in fact back in a line of perception—twenty-five years ago, when I don't know whether many of you recall that Professor Roerich's first pictures came to America. A score of pictures of Professor Roerich came to the St. Louis Exposition in the year 1904.

That Exposition had suffered considerable vicissitudes and then came to New York in the year 1905, and the manager of it got into serious difficulties. We tried our best to float that exposition. Still it tumbled into debt and was afterwards sold for the Government storage charges in San Francisco. Fifteen years after that, I was sitting in my study down in Pennsylvania, when I received a remarkable letter from Professor Roerich. He said that he had heard something about my activities in connection with Russian art; did I know his work, did I know about his present work and would I help him. I went to the little telegraph station in the small Quaker town in Pennsylvania and sent Professor Roerich this cablegram—"I know you. Come to America. I can help you."

Well, we did our little bit, and Tarshinsky, the sculptor and I went down in October and met Professor Roerich. The rest of that wonderful story is public knowledge and public property. You know what happened afterward. You know that the Chicago artists undertook to route the exposition and many of them are now here. You know, I am sure, how the thing rolled up like a magnificent ball; how Mr. Horah, Miss Grant and others took hold of the situation and placed it in that magnificent position which it is today.

We can see in this building the wonderful realization which is something like those azure towers in that azure city of the spirit and of the mind which are being followed by them into different parts of the world.

It is a great pleasure and a great spiritual privilege to be here this morning and to participate with you in a small way in this message which comes, this sign of hope which from all hearts and in all lands rises to the sky. I thank you. (Applause).

THE CHAIRMAN: We must all realize that a building of this kind is not possible except through the support, generosity, and the devoted service of the Friends of the Roerich Museum, and I am going to ask the President of the Society of the Friends of the Roerich Museum, Dr. Charles Wharton Stork, to say a few words to you. (Applause).

DR. CHARLES WHARTON STORK: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I wish first to welcome you here in my official capacity as President of the Society of Friends of Roerich Museum and to add a word to what Miss Grant has already spoken. Truly the Roerich Museum can never ever be bounded by walls, nor housed in even such a beautiful building as Mr. Corbett has planned for us here. And for that reason the Friends of the Roerich Museum are organized, and we have endeavored through our magazine, "The Archer," and through the interests of our members, whose number we hope will increase from year to year, to spread the spirit and the knowledge of Professor Roerich. This is the spirit in his paintings which Roerich has expressed. But the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of beauty in all things, and the creation of an art which will be spiritual throughout all the arts which it undertakes to express.

This building reminds me of the passage in Shakespeare, which spoke of sermons in stone. But truly this building is not a sermon. It is as Professor Roerich said, what one should possess on entering a village, and that is a song. This is true also in every community of humanity. This building will be a song in stone; the song with the harmonious vibration of rich and deep, enduring music. That reminds me of one aspect of Roerich's art, which many of you know and which you should feel more and more as you look at his paintings; that is his color. This is to be seen in the color of the building, which is very seldom realized.

Roerich's paintings were largely inspired by, and in the same spirit as those of the great Russian composers, in whose work he assisted. We saw this in many of his first paintings as well as his decorations for the sets and costumes of the ballet of Stravinsky. That is why his colors do sing. This is apparent in his figure of the prophet who at sunrise, with his hand to an ear, hears the music of the dawn. He hears the songs which are the most beautiful; for those that are unheard are more beautiful than those that can be heard.

This building will be, then, a song in stone. It does not preach, it sings. It is full of joy; it is full of rapture, not a rapture that passes away but that is preserved in the stone. That is the greatest thing that Professor Roerich's paintings also accomplish; that when you first look at them you think that they must vanish away, that they must disappear. It is thus with music, it seems to pass and yet it endures. This building will be the same; this building will be a song. And whenever you will look at it, you will feel that vibration, you will feel that harmony.

But perhaps this building is something more than that. It is a flower; it has color. And just as Professor Roerich has put music into color, so this will express beauty in color. It will be like a flower, as it ascends from deep purple to gray, and then to shining white, pointing up to the eternal sky, full of life and of beauty, as our great poet Emerson has so perfectly expressed it.

