

## *Equitable Eastern Aids Art Expedition to Penetrate Passes of Central Asia*

*Only Bank They Found Able to Transmit Money to Nicholas Roerich, Head of Expedition, says New York Art Museum Director*

FOR the first time in history an explorer into the terrible passes of Central Asia has had as his weapons an easel and brush instead of the implements of a hunter or scientist. Professor Roerich, the world-renowned artist, who is now on an art expedition into Central Asia has just crossed the passes of Karakorum, Sasser and Kardong, perhaps the most formidable passes in the world. His trip has been financed through funds transmitted by the Equitable Eastern Banking Corporations.

From a physical point of view, painting on an expedition has its difficulties. In Darjeeling, where some of Professor Roerich's series were completed, there was constant danger of mold settling on the paintings, due to the monsoon. To avoid this it was necessary to keep the canvases constantly drying before stoves.

In Kashmir, where the next stop was made, the artist had his studio on a houseboat on Lake Vular, but such storms swept the lake that the houseboat was almost smashed against the clay banks. The artist had his studio for a time on the heights of Gulmarg. Despite the fact that constant hailstorms swept the mountain, and that cholera was raging in the valleys below, the artist finished here his series, "Banners of the East," one of the most superb series he has completed.

On the expedition the canvases which were packed in flat cases, each weighing about eight pounds, had to be carried on horses.

Anxiety has been felt over the expedition in view of the fact that these passes are the most difficult in the world, each being higher than Mont Blanc, and because the weather this season has been un-

precedentedly severe. According to the last reports, the caravan was compelled to start out a month earlier than schedule, due to the early Winter which set in. Had the caravan waited, the expedition would have halted for almost a year, as the passes are traversible for only a short time in the Fall and Summer.

At present the caravan of the expedition is perhaps one of the largest ever assembled, consisting of about 100 pack-horses, in addition to riding mounts, sixteen mules, sixteen yaks and also mountain rams. The yaks and mountain rams are used over the highest passes, as the horses are unable to carry more than their own weight.

The Roerich Art Expedition, which left America in 1923, as the first purely artistic expedition into Central Asia, consists of Professor Nicholas Roerich, the world-renowned artist, Mme. Roerich, and their son, George, the distinguished Orientalist of Harvard and the Sorbonne. George Roerich speaks most of the Eastern languages, including Tibetan, Chinese, Pali and Sanskrit.

There is also a staff of about sixty natives, consisting of Tibetans, Kiirghiz, Ladakists and others.

The expedition has already sent to New York more than 150 paintings, covering an entire panorama of the East and including paintings of some of the most sacred legends. In addition, the expedition has gathered one of the most remarkable collections of Tibetan sacred banner paintings from the monasteries. Included among them are several completed by the artist of the Tashi-lama, the religious head of Tibet. Last year, on his mysterious flight from the monastery, unpre-



to lack of supply bases, also, the caravan has been compelled to take food and

forage for a year.

Professor Roerich is regarded as one of the greatest living artists, his paintings being represented in practically every great museum in the world, including the Louvre, Luxembourg, Victoria and Albert Museum, National Museum at Rome, and others. In America, in addition to the works in the Roerich Museum, which has about 500 of his works, Roerich's paintings are represented in the Chicago Art Institute, Detroit Museum, Kansas City Art Institute, San Francisco Museum, Omaha Art Institute and others, as well as in the most prominent private collections, such as those of Lewisohn, Kahn, Spalding, Garrett and numerous others.

In addition to his art, Roerich has been renowned as an archaeologist, having made some of the most comprehensive discoveries concerning the cultures of Northern Europe. Last year the Archaeological Society of France held a special meeting in his honor upon the affirmation

ceded in history, the lama took with him only one painting, a duplicate of which is included in the collection.

Since his arrival in the East Professor Roerich has been received with great expectation throughout the East. He lived in the former house of the Dalai Lama, where he completed many of his Himalayan paintings. His remarkable interpretations of the Eastern languages, as well as his understanding of the East, have proved the greatest factors in aiding him to obtain material not heretofore shown to Westerners. In addition, the expedition has translated many writings concerning the Buddhist teachings not heretofore translated and concerning Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tze and others.

The present route of the caravan is considered the most unfamiliar in the world. The three passes are each more than 18,000 feet in height. Although Karakorum is the highest, being 18,209 feet, the Sasser Pass is the more difficult, due to the glaciers which are full of deep crevices so dangerous to traverse. Owing



"The Drops of Life" (Tibet) by N. K. Roerich

## THE EQUITABLE ENVOY

of predictions regarding the cultures and migratory movements of Southern Europe.

In speaking of the Expedition, Mr. Louis L. Horch, President of the Roerich Museum, said, "Notwithstanding that the Expedition is in a section less traversed and less known of than any other part of the world, the threads of the American world's finance can reach it and perform their missions there. The directors of our Museum were constantly advised that it would be futile to try to arrange for money transmission into Chinese Turkestan. On the other hand it would have been dangerous for the members of the Expedition to carry money with them as the inhabited sections are full of brigands. We tried every possibility for the arranging of money—and finally one bank—the Equitable Eastern

Banking Corporation was able to arrange it. This is certainly an example and a remarkable evidence of what is possible in our modern times—and indicates that the economic penetration of our world defies all kinds of geographical and physiological barriers. It is certainly an evidence of the remarkable and far-reaching power of this financial institution to have been able to arrange for the money transmissions to the Expedition.

"Incidentally I want to take this occasion to extend an invitation to all the employes of the Equitable Trust Company to visit the Roerich Museum, in New York, and to see for themselves the art treasures which have been brought to America through the efforts of this Expedition into the heart of Asia—on which we hope will have its great influence in the cause of American culture."