

It was a joy for me to renew an ancient tradition by visiting the sanctuary of Notre-Dame on the day of my arrival in Paris. Under these noble arches and in the splendor of the rose-windows, once again I felt vibrate the heroic soul of the French nation and the "French Spirit", under whose emblem has been gathered the French Association of Friends of Roerich Museum in New York. During the course of the ceremony, M. le Consul General, Maxime Mongendre, and Professor Meillet, of the College of France, delivered addresses which were interspersed with those sparks of brilliance that inspire a secular culture.

When M. Meillet spoke of the lives of other planets, he revealed all the breadth of an intelligence which liberates itself from narrow prejudices and freely evolves towards a creative conception. I remember that one member of the audience who was seated too far away from Professor Meillet to be able to hear him well told me later: "His address must have been most beautiful!" "Why?" I asked him. "His face was so inspired!" replied my friend. In truth, the sensitive image of the French savant has become still more ennobled by the long years of scientific study, by a transcendent reflection acquired only through daily contact with the treasures of Beauty and Knowledge.

Recently, when M. Henri Verne did the honors at the Delacroix Exposition at the Louvre, I had the direct sense of a triumphant synthesis.

The Centenary of Romanticism! Who knows? Is it not rather its millenium which should be celebrated at this moment? I think of the flowering of Roman style, of the heritage of the Druids, enriched through the course of centuries by new beauties. I think of the Sacred Mother of the Druids enrobed with the brilliant mantel of the Mater Maxima.

The Centenary of Romanticism! Romanticism was not born with Eugene Delacroix; he already is revealed as the product of a consciousness evolved through centuries; no, its point of departure is the heroic Roman style. Romanticism is perhaps only a synonym for heroism, and this is not a kind of spasmodic activity, but above all the ennobling of an infinite succession of actions, of thoughts and of enhancements which are spiritualized in the gradual effacement of all traces of egotism in human nature.

As multiple as are the manifestations of the genius of Delacroix, it is his spirit of synthesis which we most admire. It is this sacred synthesis which has liberated the artist from the narrow frame of an individual artist and revealed to him the unified Cosmos. It is this which permits him to reproduce with veneration the sunset and to portray with equal mastery the images of men, their sufferings, their actions and their aspirations. Perhaps, the artist himself, did not intend to express himself thus diversely. He was simply hastening to throw upon the canvas the ecstasies of his soul. But his creative genius was supported by centuries of tradition. The artist did not fear to resemble others, nor to preserve a first sketch. He allowed himself to be guided uniquely by that which surrounded him, by this triumphant reality which should have equally illumined the road for the younger generation. Among multiple manifestations of the art of Delacroix one can find material to justify the most diverse and sometimes contradictory conceptions.

How useful are such expositions! One can sincerely congratulate the director of the Louvre, in the person of M. Henri Verne,

3. All Honor to France!

3

thanks to whom the Museum is not a mortuary chamber of treasures of art, but a living institution which does not hesitate to modify the aspect of its very walls. Thanks to the reuniting of so many masterpieces scattered in distant collections, many new parallels we may ^{be} establish^{ed}. How greatly our understanding of Delacroix' powers as an artist has been enriched! Besides his great works, one sees ^{in the glass-cases} his note-books, little known, in which he inscribed his thoughts, in a writing totally different from his habitual writing, ~~in the glass cases.~~ Sparkling new facets have been added to the precious gems of Romantic Art. In truth, it is not the centenary, but the millenium of Romanticism which one should celebrate in these manifestations. And this Romanticism itself is only a particular aspect of the French style, which cannot be summarized in the volumes of a library nor in a series of pictures. But this polyhedron reflects an effulgent light from the radiance of Romanticism, that is to say, of heroism.

Perhaps this is the road towards the very essence of the French Spirit, to which neither the logic of reason nor the exactitude of calculation, nor ⁿ analysis of the sequence of facts would be able to guide us. But, if we possess the key of heroic Romanticism, this magic key will permit us to penetrate up to the very sanctuary.

Should this essential quality of man - heroism - be considered as conducive to perpetual tremors, or on the contrary, as a powerful aid in the constructive effort of the French nation?

In the actual state of infinite complications, of deviations, of contradictions and of ambiguous formulae, one is obliged to make a choice between all that which is positive and everything negative and destructive. So many new factors appear in our lives, so many

4

4. old conceptions are effaced, that psychology, like the artist seeking a silhouette, is constrained to proceed by categories and to follow some fundamental lines. We are advancing through an entangled jungle where the vines and other parasitical plants enlase too tightly the massive trunks, and the ephemeral orchids absorb an inordinate part of the sap of the roots. Once having traversed this forest, we come to a crossroad. There, as in the old tales, a laconic inscription indicates the road of Salvation. This road is the road of culture - not the culture of a material civilization, but of true culture - which from time to time opens to Humanity.

Despite the delays, new discoveries are achieved, a new wind sweeps away the ancient dust; and we are forced to advance on this road which is marked with the milestones of destiny.

It is not necessary to complicate the affairs of life, nor to distort them, nor to coldly imitate them, but to accumulate the elements of culture and to attempt thus to attain the next step.

And in this way we will arrive at the conception of the French Spirit, thus above all doubts and calculations appear the outlines of a heroism which advances towards the future. During the years when the entire efforts of the nation were aimed towards victory, France gave proof of her heroism, her self-denial and her incomparable endurance. Once again, one was able to value the quality of her soul, bright and firm, as a sword. We, who have been witnesses to these memorable years, are able to affirm that they were not the effect of a passing paroxysm. A new magnificent page has been inscribed in the annals of the country.

When we feel the Spirit of France vibrate, we seem to perceive the powerful winds which sustain her and lift her toward

new summits. At certain moments of life, to be content merely with pronouncing criticisms becomes at once useless and dangerous. Only positive action is fruitful. It reminds me of the Siberian peasants, who said: "We do not know what is going on in the capital, but we are certain that we must construct. We no longer are content to live in huts, we want two-story houses." This was not egoism, but the manifestation of a constructive and practical spirit, which was expressing itself by the organization of co-workers and a true collaboration. We are equally impressed by this same spirit in France. One glance suffices to realize that everywhere in France construction goes on. Is there not a French proverb saying that: "When building is going on, everything progresses?" This popular opinion summarizes admirably the character of ^a constructive epoch.

The noble project of M. Briand, for the unification of Europe pertains to the same constructive spirit which animates the French nation. Not long ago, such a thought would have been considered an abstraction, but at the present time, this action is so advanced that we are able to greet this new phase of international organization as a positive reality.

Thus, I take pleasure in recalling the benign features of the French savant, addressing an American audience; the creation of a Delacroix; the achieving spirit of the French people. This trinity expresses to me the culture which we find, above all, on ancient roads. It is through the purification of the ancient formula^e that we are coming back to the triumphant emblem of culture. It is not accidental that at this moment, in the most different countries, men in diverse walks of life evoke these elements of culture and unite in its name. They want to forget that which divides them; they want to rebuild on the foundation of this victorious principle. In fact, their conceptions do not differ much from each other.