

Inside is the copy of the article
 from The Theosophist, April, 1925,
 detailing the presentation of the painting
 "The Messenger" to Theosophical Headquarters
 at Adyar.



This, of course, is a photostat
 of N. Roerich's "Remember." -
 on the back is a description of
 it which I write when I give
 it to friends.

"THE MESSENGER"—AT ADYAR

By ALICE ADAIR

THE seventeenth—a number full of meaning in Theosophical records.

The month, January—the month named after Janus, the guardian of gateways, the keeper of keys, the god of opening ; for the Theosophist of the twentieth century, the month of the beginning of a new age, the month heralding the initiation of humanity into a higher phase of its ever-evolving life.

On that date, of that month, and in the Jubilee year of the Theosophical Society, Nicholas Roerich comes to Adyar. A great Russian following, fifty years after, in the footsteps of a greater Russian, whom he also worships as a fearless apostle, a messenger from the Inner World of Light, known to us as H. P. Blavatsky. Roerich leaves the Old World to take his message to the New and from America continues his pilgrimage—Eastward—to the goal of his dreams and the shrine of his hopes. India! what has that name meant for him! By his work you will know.

Nicholas Roerich comes to Adyar and in his hands he bears a gift and a torch. The gift is a painting in tempera, "The Messenger," the work of his own hands, the creation of his own genius, the testimony of his faith, the witness of his love, the earnest of his dedication to the Great Cause and its Greatest Servants. The Torch is the torch of Beauty.

What is this Beauty ?

In the Supreme Self, we find the triple aspect—Sat, Chit, Ananda: Being, Cognition, Will. To which of these should we relate Beauty? I submit that it is a composite of the three: of Being as Becoming, of Cognition as the awareness, the recognition, of things considered by the observer as beautiful, of Will which, as desire, seeks to appropriate these as happiness-giving . . .

To Plato Universals were Real, were true Being; particulars *where*, as it were are derived from, the Realities . . . *Beauty has Real Being*, and all beautiful things have this quality, which makes them Beautiful; they do not exist as Beautiful by human thought, but by Divine Ideation . . .

Beauty diversified into the Arts is the true refiner and uplifter of Humanity, for it is the instrument of Culture, the broadener of the heart, the purifying Fire which burns up all prejudices, all pettiness, all coarseness. Without it, true Democracy is impossible, equality of social intercourse an empty dream. Art is the international language, in which mind can speak to mind, heart to heart, where lips are dumb.

Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, these need no translations, they speak the Universal Mother-tongue.

Art will permeate the whole atmosphere of the New Civilisation which is on the threshold. Religion and Art have ever been twin-angels. Let us follow them as they point to the East, where the fair Dawn Maidens are tinting our earth-born clouds with their rose-tipped fingers, to welcome the Rising Sun of India as He leaps across the horizon, and floods our world with the glory of his Unveiled Face.¹

Roerich had only three days to give us. Three short days. Three precious days. How to make the most of them? So much to learn, so much to discuss, so much to plan. The first was a day of personal contacts, including the Vice-President and interviewers; and all these meetings meant either the renewal of old ties of friendship or the making of new ones. Professor Roerich does not merely talk brotherhood. He is brotherly, fearlessly, naturally, simply and convincingly brotherly. One cannot remain in his presence at loggerheads with him, with others, or with oneself. One of his favourite

¹ Quotations from Dr. Besant's Kamala Lecture, "Indian Ideals in Art," at the Calcutta University, 14th January, 1925.

and constantly recurring phrases is "It is so simple". What says the Giṭā?

Even here on earth everything is overcome by those whose mind remains balanced; the Eternal is incorruptible and balanced; therefore they are established in the ETERNAL.

The exterior man is well summarised by the interviewer for *New India*.

The well-known artist is a well-built, well-preserved man, full of health and virility, with a remarkably rounded and well-developed head, beautifully shaped hands, fine sapphire-like eyes, and a pleasant, kindly countenance, expressive of purity, calm, thought and refinement.

Questions were asked by the same interviewer with regard to differences in culture and civilisation between East and West; as to the correlation between the synthesis of Art and the synthesis of Humanity; as to whether Art is for all; what are the most favourable conditions for the development of creative art in a country; and what is the relation between Art and Spirituality. Professor Roerich's answers were:

To my mind, East and West are only conventional understandings; these divisions are not important. If we are still to speak of unification, the first condition is through Art. Through Beauty we shall reach a true understanding of religion and discover the easiest way of solving the complicated social problems. Where Beauty is manifested, there complications disappear.

In the West we have civilisation. In the East there is culture. First comes civilisation, then culture. To my mind, they are only steps.

We know that Art is always prophetic of the next human movement. If we already think of synthesis in Art, it means that the synthesis of Humanity is coming. To attain synthesis, the first condition is to avoid all prejudice. Only by the open door and the open eye can this be brought about. The whole world is our body. Before we can use it, we must open the eye and the door.

Art belongs to the whole people. It is not a question of poor people and wealthy people. It is essentially a question of feeling. One man might possess a big collection, another a fragment. The essential value of beauty is the same.

With sincere and open eyes distinguish the natural treasures of the country. Consider the past as the window of the future.

Keep the most beautiful traditions and combine them with splendid Nature.

Art is the expression of real spirituality. If spirituality is high the expression will be fine.

In concluding the interview Professor Roerich added :

We know there are some periods in the life of the people when questions of Art and Beauty become prominent and commanding. It is a very good sign. It shows that some of the prejudices are going away, and new solutions of life, therefore, become possible. Beauty is the Garment of Truth. Certainly in Art and Beauty we have a very hard struggle, but it is a happy struggle. During the last ten years we have seen that all events were not eventual ; they are before our eyes as the developing of an immense plan of evolution of humanity. Everything is now hastening. Some time ago it seemed as if only our grandchildren would see changes in the life around us ; later we felt our children would reach them ; now, even in our own generation, we can see some big changes coming. Through the true and silent language of Spirituality we can understand one another in full love, action and simplicity.

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The second day, Sunday, was a red-letter day. The presentation of the picture, a small social gathering and a Talk, with lantern slides, were the special features of its morning, afternoon and evening.

After the E.S. meeting Adyar collected in the big Hall. On an easel facing the statue of the Founders was the picture, veiled with a violet wrapping. A very lovely rendering of one of her own compositions for the piano by Marcelle Manziarly brought the right mood—stillness, harmony, alert expectancy.

A few words of quiet but deeply-felt appreciation from Dr. Cousins, and then Roerich, in one beautiful and dignified sentence made his presentation ; " In this Home of Light, let me present this picture of 'The Messenger,' dedicated to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, as the nucleus of a future Blavatsky Museum, whose motto shall be—*Beauty is the Garment of Truth.*"

The painting was unveiled, and the gift graciously acknowledged by the Vice-President, in the unavoidable

absence of our President. Then all left their seats and drew nearer for a closer view of the picture which made a deep impression on all.

An exquisite harmony of purple, clear yellow, violet-blue casts its spell over us. The delicate pure yellow hits the eye at once, bringing the light from beyond the opening door. The two figures, the woman opening the door and the messenger outside, emerge from this light, the messenger first as the bringer of the Light, then the opener of the door; and round about the walls are the symbols of the Lord of Light, the Buddha, to suggest what manner of message it is that is brought. One of the striking features of the composition is the balanced grouping of the four standing figures, two on the walls and two on the ground, not an easy feat. But Roerich has the secret of combining strength with melodious sweetness and grace. Another thing which pleases is the distribution of light and shade; and the silhouette of the quiet figure against the radiant landscape seen through the open door, where there is a path leading to a high mountain, and beyond that still further horizons where the light of the sky reflects itself as light upon the earth. The great cone of the mount is echoed in the triangular form seen in the architecture, above the doorway. But above and beyond all these sings the colour, that is the true magic of Roerich's work, that is his bridge of glory, over and through that the devas, the angelic hosts may pass. It is not without interest, nor, perhaps, significance, that the music played at the presentation was written in the key of E flat minor and the vibrations called forth by the colour harmony of "The Messenger" are those of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth harmonies of the sound of the low E or *mi*. There were strangely lovely guests present that morning, borne on the rays of the inspired art of colour and of sound, felt by many, perhaps seen or heard by a happy few. For a brief interval all were

harmonised; creators and creations, the artists, the music, the picture, and the unseen guests were in accord, a part of the Great Harmony, which is the Unity of Life, the dominant urge of Roerich's genius, and the Unity of Spirit, which is his lodestar, and ours.

When the small band of art enthusiasts met in the afternoon, making tea the excuse for a friendly discussion of the place of Art in the Theosophical Society, of the immediate urgency of its fuller expression therein and the best means to further that end, the same joyous atmosphere of comradeship prevailed. A vital sense of a common aim, of mutual help, of a true sharing of toil and stress and endeavour permeated the conversation and brought sunlight in the heart. In such circumstances the Brotherhood of Art is a reality—not a dream.

In the evening Adyar gathered again in Headquarters' Hall. These groupings of mixed nationalities, costumes and colours, in the beautiful hall with its *décor* of universal symbols is one of the strikingly picturesque features of our life here, and the semi-obscurity created by a lantern show further loosens the bonds of personality and sets the imagination free. In such a group, our great artist-brother spoke of the wonder of Beauty and the spirituality of Art. The reposeful manner, the gentle melodious speech, the dignified bearing, the simple language all add to the amalgamating fire of his genius. "As I look round me here," he said, "it seems to me that I am in Russia. There, and there, and here again, I look and everywhere I see types and they are Russian." And one knows that he *feels* as well as says it. So he draws India into the heart of Russia and there is no longer a gap called India and Russia, but a bridge called India-Russia, Russia-India. West and East are but "conventional understandings".

Then the pictures are one by one thrown upon the white sheet. With each, in the same quiet, even tones, is given a

short description, its colour scheme and a hint of its meaning. It would not interest to multiply details of these descriptions, so much that was added by the magnetic personality of the exponent would be lacking; but at least one picture may be mentioned. It is called "Miracle" and belongs to the Messiah Series. It was painted in America, and its home is the Roerich Museum in New York. For scenery the rocky heights of the Grand Canyon have been chosen. To the left, the great rocks bring the impression of a splendid natural temple. From the centre of the canvas and curving to the right is a massive arched bridge. Beyond this with an almost dazzling radiance, bursts on the sight the glory of the aura of Him Who Comes, while in the foreground seven figures prostrate themselves before It.

A small book of illustrations of Roerich's paintings, published by Corona Mundi, 310 Riverside, New York, and procurable at the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, contains several of the pictures shown that evening.

In thanking the lecturer Mr. Jinarājādāsa spoke of the delight he had experienced in seeing the Roerich Exhibition during his recent visit to New York; and regretted on behalf of the rest of us that we could not share his joy in their exquisite colouring. Apart from this, however, much remained—the nobility of form, the fine sense of proportion, the virile mysticism, the symbolism, the significant *idea*.

So ended a remarkable day.

Monday was primarily a day of business. Our artist-mystic is also a practical man; and Business with Roerich is but another phase of Brotherhood. He is a living example that the artist, the scientist and the capable business man can be reconciled in one person. Hence visits to the T.P.H., and the Vasantā Press and cordial relations established with the managers of both. Then a visit to the Montessori School and

its recent annexe, the weaving-shed, in which he was deeply interested. And then the last talk with some of the members of the Arts Centre, with questions asked and answered, suggestions made and the final counsel, "Cement, Cement," which, interpreted, means the building up of a Blavatsky Museum at Adyar to begin with, and many other things to end with.

So, on a day in January, 1925, came two messengers to Adyar—a Picture and a Man. The first remains, a promise of tangible results; the second departs, but will return. But has he departed? Miles of country may seem to separate us, but links have been made that cannot be broken. Something of himself he has left with us, something of his own fine courage and burning enthusiasm, something of his immovable faith—"Adamant like stands Beauty." This something urges—"on with the work then," the work for Theosophy, Beauty and Art. The Coming Age calls to us. The President gives her blessing, the Vice-President his enthusiasm and encouragement.

"Little Brothers" (to use a sweet and homely Russian phrase) the world over, join with us. Help us to cement the foundation stones of the Blavatsky Museum. Lend us your aid in creating a place for Art in the Theosophical Society. Help us to shrine Beauty in Adyar, "the Home of Light".

Alice Adair



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PAX CULTURA

A young man leaves
home and is looking back
on his mother and sister, -
the infinite blue spaces
of the mountains are behind
him, - at the top of the
heights of the Spirit ordained
to be attained by all
humanity. - Remember,

Mayer P. Schone

Nicholas Roerich, 1874-1947

REMEMBER

(His Country Series)