

The machine age is upon them; it presses them with its speed; it changes the nature and the meaning of the water on their frontiers and of the soil under their feet; it awakens them, nomad as



A DESERTED CARAVANSERIE

well as settler, to the need of catching up and keeping pace. Out of the twilight of sleepy, weary, nomad empires it has snatched them into the sunlight of a blazing, new day. They must and would become moderns, and they find us leading them. So they come to school to us, as once we went to them. Their children ask us puzzled questions, as once our students asked their masters.

### THE HUMAN HERITAGE

If now they ask us who are supposed to know much, what is the man-made heritage on the thin sown lines in the desert, what shall we answer them? It is difficult to answer briefly. So constrained, the writer would say: Their heritage in man-made things is the wreckage and remnants of past world-empires, empires of ideas and ideals, and empires of this earth and its materials. What this heritage, old and richly varied, may be worth in the values of the new world pressing on them, lies not in things, but in themselves.

The most important heritage of East and West in this age of great changes and machines is the human heritage. We have studied much of nature and how she can be made to work for us; we have studied things that men made, and what might become of

<sup>2</sup>For further detail on Europe's debt to Islam, the reader may be referred to Arnold and Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford Press, 1931.

them. Now our knowledge, our test tubes and our cylinders, have run away with us and brought us face to face once more in new and unexpected closeness with other men, with strange men, with a new humanity, with new human groups forming on the old nomad soil of Western Asia. Reborn peoples and new-born nations knock with our own iron robots at our gates, not to be denied admission to our new world, which we but half understand ourselves, and in which we must live reasonably with them and they with us, in quarters drawn closer together than ever before. Thus the panic of our products and their speed comes home to us, and with them a new note and a new quest. It is well that we know each other's country; it is well that we know each other's past; but above all we must know each other and ourselves.

Since the Renaissance, the last great rebirth of Europe, we have spoken much of humanism. We have often uttered the phrase, that nothing human is alien to us. Then, just as often, we have made our humanistic studies a matter of dead letters, cold words and proceeded with the technic learned of words, to study seeming harmless things. Then we dug in the past and saw man rising with his products. All these things are well, if we do not forget man—what he is and for what he strives.

Precisely as we face the Levant, out of the wreckage and the ruins of its empires, there comes to us forcefully the rumble of this summons. There is rising among us, shall we say, a new religion, or shall we say a different accent and emphasis in our religion? It claims the name of Humanism and asserts, that religion has to do with man above all else. In a new history of science George Sarton sees the fascination and the worth of each detailed problem, the attraction of the retort and the test tube. But as he gains new perspective with a larger survey, he sees what no microscope nor test tube has revealed. If our science would not weigh us down, then it must, in its progress, weave into the warp of statistics and experiments a new web of Humanism. Hans Kohn is now among us, face to face and in great works. He is interested in politics and in the science of politics. In his interest he goes East. There he surveys new nations, the interplay of nationalism and imperialism in Asia's broad fields, and he finds one predominant interest in the interplay of modern forces on her soil—the human interest.

A new Orient means a new humanity to be harmonized, to be integrated. If our interest in the East means anything, it must mean this. For it is precisely here, where thus far we have been most backward, most remiss in our search for knowledge and for sympathetic human understanding. Where we should know most, there we know least. A new mass of humans rises up to meet us in a new world. We know something of their country. We know more of their past. But they are aliens to us—East is East and



MONKS OF HAJJI BEKTASHI

West is West,—the two must meet, and we are fumbling in ignorance with a pressing need for understanding.

Though we can as yet say little on the human side, perhaps a few suggestions will be enough to start us on a fruitful search. Take the problem of the races of Western Asia. We speak glibly of the Turks, Arabs, Persians, Berbers, Afghans. Who are Turks and who are Arabs? We pride ourselves and we are concerned about ourselves, because we are a melting pot of nations. Our experiment and experience is not new. Who are the Turks of Asia Minor? A handful of Turk horsemen long since scattered and diluted among Hittites, Scythians, Cimmerians, Lydians, Gauls, Greeks, Armenians and Kurds. Who are the Arabs of Syria and Palestine? This is Olmstead's bridge of assembly. North and South have crossed it a hundred times, and each time left their

residue. The Nomad has flocked over its narrow confines, ten, twenty, thirty times. He recked little who he was and who was there before him. Can we separate the strands? Need we? To speak of racial mind and character helps us little; it is the finished product from the melting pot of nations we must understand and deal with. Take a little group from Asia Minor. It is a rare picture that Rudolf Riefstahl's photograph shows us here. They are monks of Hajji Bektash in the heart of modern Turkey. Take off their hats and uniforms and scatter them through the land as the Turkish Republic has done. Put hats and coats and trousers on them and then tell us, are these Greek, Turk, or Armenian, French, Russian or German peasants? Out of melting pots where ores for thousands of years have been commingled, the near East is forming new peoples, new nations.

And one other point these Bektash monks illustrate. Living under the constant threat of the nomad, under constant threat that groups, goods, and ideas would be shattered, in hidden corners throughout this country, little isolated groups hoard their identity, their laboriously built little world for centuries on end like a precious pearl. Bektashi and Kyzylbash in Asia Minor, Nusairi and Yezidi, Druze, Metawali, and Maronite in little Syria, with religious zeal,—each guards a heaven of his own that it may not be irrevocably lost; this is something of the problem of the Near East in its human heritage as it is rising in new groupings to meet us and to share with us the modern world.

These new groupings, this new Orient, this humanity demanding entrance and share in our world—all are our problem. Not ours in the sense of a great and far-flung empire of our own; we have little prestige of empire, little direct and intimate responsibility for world progress and world culture, to cloud our eyes. Yet these are our problem. For we are a great world power, and so we are constantly besieged for claims on our sympathy, with summons to appreciative understanding, with calls for such help as we can give. We must avoid sentimental meddling where we can do little but harm, yet we cannot build a wall of ignorance about us and flinch from our task. A sound and well founded public opinion in these United States may be an imponderable power, but it is one of tremendous weight in the world's affairs. How shall we attain it, unless those of us who sense the problem, organize

our quest for unbiased, undiluted information? Hence a New Orient Society. And because we cannot all go questing, yet are under obligation to form judgment and opinion; hence a journal, where Orient and Occident may meet and develop tolerance, sympathetic mutual understanding.

With gratitude we acknowledge work done by older societies and institutions and their publications. We do not seek to rival or replace them. With pride and pleasure we find Doctor Breasted, the director of Chicago's Oriental Institute one of our members. He has begun our work at its beginning, and has laid for us a broad and firm foundation. But if this foundation has meaning and importance in our eyes, we cannot stop there. As he stimulates scientific research in the Ancient Near East, so must we in a New Orient; as he interests and trains workers in his field, so must we seek and foster them in our general quest. With both a New Orient Society and a journal, we need to develop, not a lesser and smaller Institute for the Ancient Orient, but a greater and broader Institute for the New Orient, to help us meet and live as neighbors with a new world of the East, Near and Far.

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