

UNDERWORLD COURIER

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(Sat. the 22nd, being a holiday, the press-room was closed)

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Lectures. The series of Focillon lectures came to a close on Friday. All who had sat so intently quiet while that rich and fluent stream of words flowed through their minds and spirits must have been thankfully conscious of the rare privilege that had been theirs: of the deep cultural reservoir from which the stream issued forth. Mr. Thacher, after M. Focillon has spoken the last few beautiful words, announced the list of prospective lectures and was greeted with a spontaneous outburst of applause when he alluded feelingly to the series just finished and promised another conference by M. Focillon later in the year. M. and Mme. Focillon left the next morning for Worcester and will not return to D.O. till Wednesday. "He is so much better", said Mme. Focillon: "since being at Dumbarton Oaks. So happy here."

Junior Fellows and Visitors. Miss Virginia Wylie, who has been working in the Princeton Index, has a leave of absence to come to D.O. to pursue her studies in certain 13th century Vatican metal work. She will use the source material here and at the Library of Congress, and will not be living at D.O. Indeed, she is in the throes of finding, in this crowded city, some place where her mother and herself can find comfortable quarters within their means. (All those who are established in any domiciles in Washington now should - and surely do - give thanks for that fact.)

Mr. Hauck has become our best non-art book borrower. He has been led through the shelves of memoirs, history, poetry, fiction and French books, and takes out three at a time for bed-side reading.

Eugene Ormandy visited the collection one day last week. Miss Rathbone had the pleasure of conducting (not meant as a pun) him on his tour and reports that he was most interested.

Mr. Lawrence Sickman of the Kansas City Museum was one of the most appreciative visitors. He saw the gardens as well as the house and sensed the special quality of D. O. as if it had been something he had always dreamed of and never believed could exist.

In a different category, but no less observant along certain lines, was Mr. Parkhurst, assistant business manager of Harvard. He was led from attic to Underworld, from Quarters to Orchids. It was a lovely day: and the guide enjoyed the outside thorough tour.

Dr. Georg Swarzenski, senior, was here from the Mus. of Fine Arts in Boston, and Mr. Donald Bear from Santa Barbara

Here is an exhibition which must surely be seen. And after being seen, reported fully.

And here is a title: *The Curious Gardener* by Jason Hill, London, 1932: which is tempting, especially if one reads further; "fine, interesting descriptions of antique flowers" \$2.75 K. Gregory, 222 East 71st Street (a new locale for a book seller in our experience) And this book, recently acquired for the Research Library is an enticing frigate (or so it seems to some of the less learned explorers) ~~on which to sail back into the past~~

**ANCIENT
ROME** by **Marie Carcopino**.
Translated by E. O. Lorimer,
edited by Henry T. Rowell. 342
pp. New Haven: Yale Univer-
sity Press. \$4.

By GILBERT HIGHER

BURIED towns used to be regarded as quarries for works of art. Antiquaries were systematic tomb-robbers. When Pompeii was first excavated, men simply dug into the temples and the houses around the market-place, where they were fairly sure of finding statues, coins, gems, graceful ornaments, or even transportable paintings. Having looted what they could, they either left the gaping excavation to the weather or covered it up again to hide the eyesore. When Fiorelli was entrusted with the diggings there he found that most people simply expected him to probe for more buried treasure. To his eternal credit, he refused.

He devoted more than ten years to clearing up the debris left by the volcano and by his predecessors. He shored up tottering walls, cleared away masses of treasureless earth, set up fallen pillars and leveled the streets. All this was very dull and unremunerative. Editorial writers asked why he was not elsewhere, discovering the works of Praxiteles and some vases of solid gold. It was only when he had finished that the world understood he really had found a hidden treasure. He had—at least in part—re-created the past. There it stands, between the bright Italian sky and the bright Italian sea, the busy, money-making, sensual little town with its handsome houses and its narrow streets, and the fiery mountain which killed it still smoking ominously in the near distance. The chattering crowds are gone now from its streets; but an echo of their talk lingers in a corner where a joke has been scrawled on a wall, or on a facade bearing an effusive election announcement, and even in the staircase with its scribbled shopping list.

Museums are full of great works of art. There they stand, impeccable, serene, in an airless eternity. They too are a part of the life of Greece and Rome; but they are the part we think of first, and sometimes we concentrate on them too much. Beyond them there is the background for which they were created and in which they take a fuller and richer life—which, in fact, often explains their most enigmatic beauties. The background is the daily life and work of the Greek and Roman peoples; and of that we do not know nearly enough, as yet. It is to two generations of quiet, unrewarded workers like Fiorelli that we must be grateful for bringing back far more of that vanished life than we could ever have thought possible, and delivering us from the delusion that Greece and Rome were inhabited by handsome, blind-eyed statues uttering great literature and living on air. The work he did in Pompeii has been done again and again in other places—in Athens and Rome above all. The people in those cities were very real. In some ways they were more real, because more fully and actually alive, than any

only his own generation remains always a child.

And now, by combining these discoveries with literary and historical evidence, the acting rector of the University of Paris, Jérôme Carcopino, has written a full and vivid reconstruction of the daily life of Rome. The translation is poor, and the proof-reading is less good than it ought to be; but the additional notes and appendix added by Professor Rowell partly compensate for that. It is a fascinating work, written with much of the grace and smoothness characteristic of even the most learned French scholars. And its great merit is that, with a masterly command of a multitude of scattered details—the size of a pocket sundial, the width of a side street, a poor poet's breakfast—its author combines a view so clear and broad that his book is not a collection of dead atomic facts, but the description of a living organism.

On many points specialists will disagree with him. He is very free with his comparisons of Roman streets and houses to those of modern Algerian towns, which is a pardonable exaggeration. And he is often so misled by the exaggerations of satirists as to believe them to be true and typical—as an archaeologist he thinks that a fact is a fact, whatever its context. But the masses of new material which are set forth in his book make it more useful than any other work of the same kind in English; and as such it deserves a wide public. If they read it with due caution, they will find that gradually the statues come to life, the tall porticoes fill with strollers, gossipers and gamblers, and the noise and wealth of Rome, less mechanical and more human than our own, are re-created in their minds.

Horticultural Art Show On View at Grolier Club

Several Centuries Covered by Books and Engravings

A loan exhibition of illustrated books, engravings and drawings of flowers and plants comprising the work of several centuries was opened yesterday at the Grolier Club, 47 East Sixtieth Street. The collection, consisting of 134 volumes noted for their rarity and beauty, has been arranged by the Garden Club of America in association with the Grolier Club. It is called "Plant Illustration Before 1850."

Prominent exhibits include a tenth-century Byzantine manuscript "Herbal" with plants and trees drawn in watercolors on vellum, the first "Herbal" printed in Germany, known as the prototype for all following works of the fifteenth century, and a "Book of Hours" illuminated in France by Jean Bourdichon, court painter to Charles XI. The marginal devices of the latter are naturalistic studies of iris and sweet peas in full colors.

A large selection of monumental color-plate books published in the nineteenth century and showing sized varieties of flowers richly en-

graved and colored is a prominent part of the exhibition. In addition to illustrated books, a series of French color engravings of fruit and flowers by Alexander Charbonnier and several flower pieces lithographed by Currier & Ives and other popular engravers are included.

The exhibition was arranged by Mrs. John Delafield, Mrs. Samuel Seabury, Miss Ruth Grannis, Boies Penrose, Harry Shaw Newman, Otto Torrington, Charles F. McCombs and Alexander Davidson Jr., chairman of the Grolier Club exhibition committee. The collection will be open to the public beginning today and running until March 31.

Book notes, continued

The Benefit sale for the British War Relief. Some interesting possibilities developed at the first meeting of the book committee. A manuscript of MacLeish (let us hope it will be that article on American with its "strict Thermopolae") will be put up for sale: signed books by Mrs. Chanler, Mrs. Beale, Mr. Berle, Walter Lippmann: a recent group photograph of the justices of the Supreme Court, autographed by each one. To each member of the committee are given certain duties; each is pledged to collect 100 book donations; to your Keeper is given the added duty of pricing them all! Is there anything from your private library such as a finely bound set of Emerson (a duplicate, as you have the complete works) and so forth, that you would want to contribute? If so, I could send a list for you to o.k. It would help one member of the committee in gathering her hundred!

The A. Edward Newton Library is to be sold at the Parke Bernet galleries in March and April. The galleries have published a beautifully printed advance booklet, and a set of the catalogues has been ordered. They will be instantly scrutinized and your attention directed to any tempting morsels.

A new assistant Secretary of State. (formerly famous for his collection of coins)

Gardens. Mr. Bryce appeared this morning, sailing into the lower library like a full-rigged ship in the sunset glow. He has put on pounds and has a rich sunburn. The snow-drops powder the ground on the slope leading to the Terrior column, and the aconites startle one by their bright drops of gold. Large pink buds on the peony bushes on that same slope are frightening. But perhaps these are a specialty of those particular plants and do not mean a too-early rushing into bloom. New bird notes are heard each day, and there is a continuous rustling - retreating and hurried - as one walks in the forsythia region. (Nevertheless the weather is wintry, but very clear.)

Shaw Named Assistant Secretary of State

President Roosevelt today nominated G. Howland Shaw, chief of the Division of Foreign Service Personnel, to be an Assistant Secretary of State.

Mr. Shaw, a native of Boston, is 48. His background in the State Department has brought him into close touch with Near Eastern affairs. He was twice assigned to Istanbul, Turkey, and in 1926 was chief of the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

In 1920 and 1921 he served as executive assistant to the Secretary of State. In 1919 he had been secretary to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, meeting in Paris. In 1923 he served in a similar capacity to the American mission at the Lausanne Conference.

Mr. Shaw had his first experience in foreign service personnel work between 1927 and 1929. He had several assignments at Constantinople, now Istanbul, being Consul General there in 1936 and 1937. He became chief of the Foreign Service Personnel Division in 1937.

A personal note. I am always conscious that the Underworld Courier, with its "passion for anonymity" leaves unexpressed the emotion deep in all our hearts, caused by missing - constantly missing - our daily association with you. Writing on my own, and without consultation, I am nevertheless sure that, dedicated as we are to contributing our best to Harvard; enthusiastic as we are about Harvard's appreciation of the great gift and their high resolve to prove worthy of it; convinced as we are that it is all right; we have memories that flame up suddenly, smitingly. And, shameful to admit - and, perhaps here, I have the right to speak only for myself - a rebellious lament: "why, oh why, after experiencing it, must we have lost this inestimable companionship?" It has long been in my heart to suggest an issue of the Courier devoted solely to this: comprised of little secret, sealed confessions, unedited ...And if such an issue is never sent, it will be because some of us are too shy, or feel it would be bold, or not in line with the purpose of our bulletin, but not because there does not lie in each heart - inexpressible perhaps - the desire "to lay our spirit, prostrate, palpably, before you".

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