

America's Art Treasures

By PROF. R. V. D. MAGOFFIN

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Every now and then some American traveller returning from Paris, upon being asked what he thinks of the Louvre, opines in a patriotic way that it is not a patch upon this or that department store in his own home town. That type of visitor, however, is following the long, long trail of the dodo, and with that now mythical bird will soon vanish into the limbo of the unknown.

London and the British Museum, Paris and the Louvre, Munich and the Glyptothek, Rome and the Vatican and the Terme, Madrid and the Prado, Cairo, Constantinople, Athens, Berlin, Copenhagen, and their Museums are practically inseparable phrases. New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art have long since belonged to the same category.

The fifth edition of the "Handbook to the Classical Collection" of the Metropolitan, which was published only the other day, has nearly twice as many pages and illustrations as the last edition two or three years ago, and brings one suddenly to the realization that the art and archaeology of ancient Greece and Rome can be seen, studied, and appreciated in New York on Fifth Avenue at 82d Street. Every year additions have been made to the collection; the daily press has never failed to mention or enumerate them. But it is the very many additions that have been made in the past ten years that fairly stagger one when he is brought face to face with them. Perhaps the most noteworthy thing about the classical collection is the evenness of it. The majority of foreign museums are known for their huge collections of this or of that; but, after all, the purpose, for which a museum is to be commended or assisted, is to exhibit a collection which is representative in character and selective in values.

Pericles said to the Athenians in his most famous speech, "We are lovers of beauty without extravagance." What he meant was that their art had inherent beauty, humanistic conceptions, restraint, sense of fitness, and simple directness, without sentimentality. The Athenians had about them at every turn objects of a kind which they thought, and rightly, were necessary for the education of their youth into a well rounded and well grounded

citizenship. That heritage of art appreciation is a gift which we of today are eager to share.

It was not many years ago that Helen of Troy belonged to the fancies of mythology and not to the facts of historical novels. Daedalus and Icarus in their aeroplanes and Theseus stringing the Bull of Minos were airy fairy films gliding before the eyes of imagination. But now we can go into the Prehistoric Greek Period room at the Metropolitan and get the very spots knocked out of our incredulity. The hurried visitor, or the one a bit intolerant of any art but the best, may dash through the room that has cases full of painted vases of the early Greek period in geometric style. But his dash has in it something of the early intolerance that visitors have for primitives in picture galleries. On a third or fourth visit the significance of beginnings takes hold of even the most hardened classical periodist. Well known decorative patterns catch the roving eye, types of vase shapes arrange themselves in historical precedence, colors of paint and firing on the pottery, stylistic character of terracottas and of bronzes force themselves into one's consciousness. Early Greece becomes a reality.

The majority of people, judging by the number of visitors, prefer early and primitive things to those that are archaic. Yet the Etruscan bronze chariot and the Panathenaic amphorae with their fine paintings of athletic events are well worth notice. But when the visitor arrives in the rooms where the art of the 5th century B. C. begins, he soon begins to recognize that there is a difference. He will marvel at the bronze statuette of a discus thrower, tense with muscular potentiality; at the bronze boy landing after his running broad jump; at a terracotta relief of the nurse washing the feet of her master of 20 years earlier, Odysseus or Ulysses. The vase painted by Euphronios in a Greek cylix, where Heracles with his club, his face peeping out of the jaws of the Nemean lion skin, hurries forward intent to complete another of his fabled labors, will attract attention. One will be surprised that so much of Greek life is told in the pictures on these fifth-century vases. One can see on one vase two women folding their clothes and perfuming them,

(Just turn the page)

Cold Made Plant Evolution

The evolution of modern plants and of modern climates began together at the North Pole some six or seven million years ago, when the last of the dinosaurs were still lumbering about the earth. It continued with increasing speed through the Tertiary age which followed, until the comparatively recent time of the glaciers. It was during this time, according to the record of the rocks, that the plants of the earth began to show evidences of being divided into growth zones influenced by climate; until then, all the earlier plants were of types such as now grow in the tropics, and they were distributed evenly over the whole earth, indicating the prevalence of a uniformly warm climate.

Dr. Arthur Hollick of the New York Botanical Garden has outlined the evidence for this theory that the first temperate zone plant life evolved in the polar regions. The higher forms of flowering plants, he says, are primarily adaptations to a climate of alternating warm and cold seasons, and their final invasion of the still uniformly warm tropics has been recent and is a matter of competition with the plants they found there rather than a response to a climatic urge. And it is in the tropics today that the only relics of the vegetation of an earlier world, the cycads and similar plants remain to contest with the late-coming modern plants for a foothold. Plant fossils of Tertiary age from the tropics are very little different from the living plants of some regions, whereas Tertiary fossils from the regions of the earth where winter comes show evidences of radical and rapid evolution.

Science News-Letter, September 3, 1927

PSYCHOLOGY

Relatives Grade Alike

Good marks in school "run in families," if the grades of a hundred brothers and sisters in the University of Oregon are any testimony.

The records of related students selected from the period since 1919 were examined by Dr. R. R. Huestis, assistant professor of genetics, and T. P. Otto to test the principle that individuals of the same heredity brought up in the same environment react in the same way.

Brothers showed greater divergence than sisters while the girls had consistently higher grades than the boys, Dr. Huestis declared in a report of the test to the *Journal of Heredity*.

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before they are to be put away. On another a seated bride receives her wedding gifts; on another is a boy playing a harp with seven strings, and singing to its accompaniment.

It is easy to linger over the Tanagra figurines that belong to the fourth century B. C., because one sees in these statuettes of clay, six or eight inches high, the women of 2,400 years ago as if one saw them today. Here a lady is fixing her hair, there fully dressed for the street is another lady, her hat on her head, and her fan in her hand. Here and there some of the original color remains. It is a real discovery to find that the women wore clothes in those far off days as brightly colored as they do today. And although they all wear the same two under and outer garments, no two women ever drape or wear them the same way.

The bedroom of a Boscoreale villa from near Pompeii is the pride of the museum, and rightly. No one should fail to see it and admire its frescoes. They are in what is known as the Second or Architectural style of Roman wall painting (about 80 B. C.-79 A. D.), and the many storied buildings with balconies and colonnades will send the beholder away with a different idea of how Roman houses looked than he had ever before imagined.

Of the many statuary pieces, perhaps the fourth century B. C. head of an athlete is the most pleasing, although there is also a small marble relief of a man on horse-back which is very reminiscent of the wonderful pieces of the same kind on the frieze of the Parthenon. The court of Wing K and the jewelry room always excite both astonishment and admiration.

A few days at the Metropolitan Museum will amaze one and cause him to wonder whence all the visitors come. The American travellers who come back from Europe and "murate" about the way the people over there visit their own museums, after visiting the Metropolitan today, are silenced.

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Because so many kinds of marine animals are becoming extinct in Pacific coast waters, the sea front along the Scripps Institution of Oceanography has been protected by California law.