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BOOK REVIEW

Henry Shaw: His Life and Legacies. By William Barnaby Faherty, S.J. University of Missouri Press, 200 Lewis Hall, Columbia, MO 65211. ISBN 0-8262-0644-1. 1987. 228 pp. \$29 (cloth).

Henry Shaw, born in Manchester, England in 1800, the son of a prosperous ironmonger, arrived in Saint Louis in 1819 with a small shipment of tools and died there, a man of wealth and distinction, in 1889. In early years a prudent and successful merchant, he turned in later life to money-lending and real estate, finally amassing a substantial fortune. His gifts to the city of Tower Grove Park and the Missouri Botanical Garden, and to Washington University of a chair of Botany, entitle him to enduring fame and gratitude as a model of far-sighted civic benevolence.

In this biography Father Faherty relates Shaw's rise to riches and the genesis of the Garden in meticulous detail, setting both in a historian's context of social history. By all accounts kindly, honorable, cultured, and soft-spoken, Shaw appears in retrospect not a very interesting man. He was generous to his family but seems to have had no really intimate friends and he died a bachelor. His belief in the vine as the prime catalyst of civilization was neatly illustrated by an enviable private cellar. An enigma not solved in the book is Shaw's motive in the creation and endowment of the Garden. Anyone who has contemplated the elegant but ostentatious marble effigy in the mausoleum that he dedicated to himself is likely to wonder whether his generosity was unadulterated by a desire to perpetuate his name. Although he had the benefit of advice and encouragement from Asa Gray, George Engelmann, and the Hookers, Shaw's appreciation of Botany as a science seems to have been half-hearted. His tardy endowment of a school of Botany seems to have been coaxed out of him. The botanical reader is likely to turn the last pages of the biography with the perception that it was indeed Shaw, the Maecenas, who built the theater and adorned the stage, but that the drama of the Missouri Botanical Garden's growth into an institution of global importance in its field begins only at the moment that the spare energetic figure of William Trelease sets foot on the boards.

The book is written in clear straightforward style and is richly illustrated with maps, portraits of Saint Louis notables, and photographs of the Garden and the protagonist. St. Ignatius might be surprised at the etymology proposed for the word fruticetum on page 195. — RUPERT C. BARNEBY, New York Botanical Garden.