

# LAST DAYS OF FAIR.

## SOME SIGHTS THAT ALL SHOULD BE SURE TO VIEW.

Writer in "Harper's" Tells of Impressive Scenes at the Exposition—Lessons of Outdoor Pleasure Taught—Humor in the Buildings and on the Grounds—Perfect Executive System—City Within a City, Where All Is Order and System—Triumph for Chicago.

Harper's Weekly, Oct. 21: There are now but few weeks remaining before the Fair at Chicago will have come to an end, and the last chance of seeing it, or anything like unto it, will have gone out of your power. There are few things that some one is not enough of a genius to describe, but I do not think that the World's Fair has found its Boswell, or that it ever will. The artists who designed the Fair have been able and have been big enough to give us an idea of their work in their illustrations in the magazines, and even the much-despised photograph has done much to make one understand, more, indeed, than have any words spoken or written. For all time some writers have shied at something beyond them by acknowledging that "it has to be seen to be understood," and that it is more "easily imagined than described," and if there ever was a case when this retreat before something beyond one's powers was justified it is when one sets forth to tell of the wonders and charm of this World's Fair.

Of course the thing to see at the Fair is the illumination of the Court of Honor at night. You should see this from the water, in a launch or gondola, and not from the embankments, where your attention is distracted by your having to push your way through the crowd if you are on foot, or you disturb others by running them down if you are in a rolling-chair. But if you are in a launch on the water you can give yourself up entirely to the scene around you, and you have the added wonder of the sight of thousands of people massed in silent rows around the edge of the lagoon, just as though they were waiting for some great event to happen, or for some miracle in keeping with the tremendous beauty of the scene about them. People try to give you an idea of this scene by comparing it to Venice on the nights when the city is illuminated, and to the beauty of the Acropolis when it is shown off by colored lights and fireworks.

### Old World's Best.

This is the best the Old World can do towards helping us to understand this city of the New World. But it is not enough; for while Venice has the effects of the lights on the water she has not the great buildings grouped so closely and so grandly together, nor are the Parthenon and the other ruins of the Acropolis on a scale of sufficient grandeur to make one understand in any particular the extent of the temples of the lake-front. It is like trying to make a person appreciate the Sphinx in the desert by the little bronze copy you use for a paper weight. This same Sphinx by moonlight was the most impressive thing I saw in the East. Not as one sees it by day, with tourists and photographers and donkey-boys making it cheap and familiar, but at night, when the tourists had gone to bed, and the donkey boys had been paid to keep out of sight and the moonlight threw the great negro face and the pyramids back of it into masses of black and silver, and the yellow desert stretched away on either side so empty and silent that one thought he was alone and lack 2,000 years in the past, discovering these great monuments for the first time. And yet the Court of Honor illuminated was as much more impressive than this as the ocean by moonlight is more impressive than the painted ocean on the back drop of a theater. And the curious wonder of the sight is that while all of the great monuments of the Old World have historical values back of them to help their impressiveness these of the World's Fair have nothing to speak for them but what lies before you. They have no past to help them; and, what is the worst of all, they have no future. That every one who has visited the Fair should feel this so keenly is significant of one of its greatest qualities. It is this peculiar charm which makes you feel that it has become a part of you and of your experience; you have made your home there as you do in certain cities and not in others, and as you certainly never did in any other World's Fair. You find that you have grown to want certain of its views and vistas, and that you have accustomed yourself to its ways and its comforts. You cannot give up to the thought that you will never again glide through the lagoons at night in a gondola with a Venetian singing "Santa Lucia" at the bow, and with the Wooded Island glowing with fairy-lamps like fire-flies, and the ducks and the swans hurrying out of your way, or that you cannot creep into the Court of Honor and feel your own insignificance as the search-lights turn and twist like a fencer's foil, pointing down to the fountains or up to the winged angels, or stealing along the length of the Peristyle silently as one who shows something to you and makes no comment, knowing there is none to make.

### What It Teaches.

If the Fair has taught us nothing else it has taught us to take our pleasure in beautiful places, that a dinner tastes better out of doors than in a hot restaurant, that wine is all the better for music, and that things that are made merely to be looked at are quite as essential as others made merely for use. We are not a nation given to decoration, but the Fair has taught us the value of it.

One of the most interesting successes of the Fair lies in its ability to please every one, to give each person some one thing which exactly fits his or her idea of what is beautiful in art or wonderful in execution, something which is all-satisfying and which justified the whole. To many the first sight of the Peristyle was enough to repay them for their long journey; others found the Midway exactly on the level of their intelligence and went no further; and one young woman begged me not to miss a knight made entirely of prunes; and another thought the best thing she had seen was a man who, during the illumination, walked a tight-rope with fireworks attached to his feet and hands. Another man I know spent the greater part of his time casting a flyline for a prize, and another in studying his interior anatomy in the Anthropological Building. "I'll bet you don't know how your liver works," said he to me. "You come with me and I'll show you. It's the most interesting exhibit in the place." Some of the stories of the Fair, whether true or not, are worth preserving—the one, for instance, of the girl who asked the Columbian guard what was the meaning of the painting titled "La Cigale," and which shows a young woman very thinly clad and shivering in the winter's blast. The guard referred to the catalogue and said, promptly, "La Cigale; it's a comic opera, and that's Lillian Russell." Or that of the woman who approached a gentleman leaning over the embankment above the lagoon and asked him where she could see the lagoons. The gentleman pointed with his stick at the water and the woman peered anxiously over the railing, but on finding nothing there but water, turned to him with a toss of her head and said, scornfully, "You think you're mighty smart, don't you?" She probably told her people at home that that was the only rude man she had met at the Fair.

### Executive Department.

There is one side of the Fair that interests few people, because it is not an exhibit, and because it does not come prominently into sight. That is the executive part of it. Things move so smoothly in the White City that one hardly appreciates how much is owing to those who help to make them move smoothly, and who are known by their works. We do not stop to think that this is really a great city, with a street-cleaning department, a police and fire department, an electric-light plant of its own, and what corresponds to a Mayor and Board of Aldermen. In its way the conception and the carrying out of the laws of this municipality are one of the most wonderful features of the great Fair, and that there has been no scandal and no "jobbery" connected with the fair name of this fair city is one of the proudest boasts of Chicago's people. That is, it would be if they were given to boasting.

There was a time when they were, when they were known for that more than anything else, but that time has passed. Chicago has arrived. Now she does not have to talk; she can afford to sit still in the background and let others talk for her. Columbus himself found it necessary to do a great deal of talking about what he could do before he was given a chance to do it, and after he had accomplished his purpose he let the other people talk, and they have been talking ever since. The people of Chicago talked too before the Fair was built; now they merely look polite-

ly bored when you rave about it, or about the energy and awful extent of their great throbbing city. They have succeeded in a great, generous way, and they will have to be counted upon hereafter as they have never been in the past.

Chicago had it in her power to give the designing and the entire work of the building up of the Fair to her own people; the Fair was hers to do with as she liked. And what she chose to do was to ask the best men in their several lines of work, whether that work was laying out roadways, or painting frescoes, or designing a temple, to come to her aid from every part of the Union and from the Old World. This is her triumph and this is where she showed herself as big and generous and unafraid as her citizens have always claimed her to be. The reward is hers. When I left this country six months ago people spoke of it as the Chicago Fair; now since my return I hear it spoken of as the World's Fair, and the people of Boston and New York tell you how proud "we" should be, and how well "our" Fair compares with others. We all claim it now; but if it had been a failure, as the New York papers tried to make it out to be, would we not still be speaking of it as the Chicago Fair?

It is just as much the Chicago Fair today when it closes, amidst the congratulations and cheers of a whole people, as it was before the papers found they were on the wrong tack and veered about to praise it, and it will always be remembered as the Chicago Fair, and deserves to be so remembered.