

## INFLUENCES OF THE EXPOSITION

A Brief Argument in Reply to Those Who Ask in Relation to the World's Fair, "Is It Worth While?"

Now and then one hears the query. In relation to the great world's fair which is being prepared for opening at St. Louis. "Is it worth while?" This query comes from those who, after viewing the rapidly growing spectacle, are possessed of the feeling that it is a great pity to build so mightily and so beautifully and then destroy.

"You are creating here," they say, "a colossal spectacle which will shine resplendently, dazzlingly, bewilderingly, for a limited period, and then fade again into nothingness. Is it worth while to expend so much money and such stupendous energies of art and industry upon a thing which, for all its magnificence, must be torn down and carted away so soon?"

Those who ask this question look merely at the material side of the exposition, ignoring the deeper significance of it. The man of keener spiritual vision discerns weighty reasons to support the theory that the exposition is indeed worth while; he sees in every one of its multitude of features something which suggests that, despite the leveling hand of the destroyer that needs must follow the builder, a universal exposition does not die when its minarets are shaken down and its temples broken into fragments.

It is not an exaggeration to say that millions of persons who visit this exposition will carry away with them impressions which will outlast even their own lives, and, having wrought beneficial effects upon themselves will be passed down to their posterity.

Every exposition is educative; even the county fairs have their instructive side. I recall to mind a certain boy who, until his tenth year, had not been beyond his small native village. He attended the fair at the county seat and saw, for the first time in his life, things collected for display. He was amazed. There opened up to him a wider view of life than he had known. For years thereafter he talked of the wonders of the county fair, and when he became a man of letters, he became a representative in Congress, a brilliant orator, a profound scholar, he was wont to speak of the influence that had awakened his hitherto sluggish mind and given him a new outlook upon life.

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition will be to a county fair as a solar system to a flock of star-dust. If the homely little exhibition of farm products in the fenced enclosure at the county seat proves an awakening influence upon the mind of the country boy, what shall we say of an exposition in which the minute detail of all industries, all arts, all sciences is set up, item by item, into a world-embracing composite of display, wherein use and beauty go hand in hand?

The world's fair whose gates will be thrown open the 30th day of April is to be an all-inclusive exposition of what the world has done and is doing, and how it has done and is doing it. A gentleman who recently visited the grounds remarked that he considered a season spent at a great exposition as beneficial as a four years' course at college. He spoke from personal experience, being a graduate of Yale and having been identified with the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo in a capacity which enabled him to make a thorough study of the enterprise in all its branches.

There are today in New York and in other cities of America and in Europe a number of men and women gaining place and fame in the fine arts, such as painting and sculpture, who acknowledge that the Columbian exposition at Chicago gave them their first definite inspiration toward the artistic life. There are poets and novelists, teachers and lecturers, who received from that exposition such impressions of beauty and such deepening of knowledge as enabled them to find their proper life-work. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women who were children 10 years ago and who were privileged to spend a number of days at the Chicago world's fair now look back with gratitude for the permanent impressions received there, which have served to broaden their views and give them a moral and spiritual uplift that endows their lives with a lasting benefit.

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all we know on earth, and all we need to know," wrote John Keats, pre-eminent singer of the psalms of life, nearly a century ago. Delightful as are the songs of the poets, whose soul was steeped in the splendors of Greek idealism, the present age denies the accuracy of his observation. In this age we need to know much more than beauty, otherwise we fall into an empty decline. This is the strenuous era; it is the age of achievement, the day of doing things. The world's fair purposes to be the exponent of the present day; primarily, though by no means neglecting "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." At this exposition history is to be taught by object lessons—the exhibition of costumes, arms, implements, manufactures, precious documents, from the beginnings of civilization to this day. The industries also are to be taught by actual operation of the mechanisms necessary in the making of things and the development and disposition of commodities.

That an exposition of such universality of treatment must have a very appreciable influence upon the arts, industries, education and commerce of the future is not to be disputed with any reasonableness. It is reasonable to predict that numerous cities and towns will derive immediate and distinct benefits from this exposition, in the adoption of ideas for civic improvements, sanitation, landscaping, architecture and educational arrangements suggested by the wonderful array at St. Louis. In a magnificent palace devoted to that important theme, education is to have its first universal showing, and here will be presented opportunities for teachers to compare the educational systems and accomplishments of every American state and practically every foreign land. Who can deny that a season's study of the science of education under advantageous auspices will have its effect for good upon thousands of communities the world over? In manufactures, mining, agriculture, the displays of both products and processes—things made and things making—will be marvelously comprehensive. One finds it difficult to withhold the prediction that multitudes of boys and youths who visit this exposition will absorb impressions which will be the primary influence toward shaping their careers. The lad from the backwoods of Arkansas will watch with curious interest and operation of shoe-making machinery. Twenty years hence he may be one of the great captains of commerce in the manufacture of shoes. That boy from the prairie town of Illinois will be attracted by the mining exhibits in the great mining gulch, and the next generation may know him as an inventor of improved mechanism or processes for converting the crude ore into the metals of commerce. And this palpitating world of the great cities, who, through his overwhelming curiosity to see things,

has been enabled to visit the exposition, may find in the agricultural exhibits something that will cause him to forsake the world's narrowness of this city life and become a happy and useful farmer.

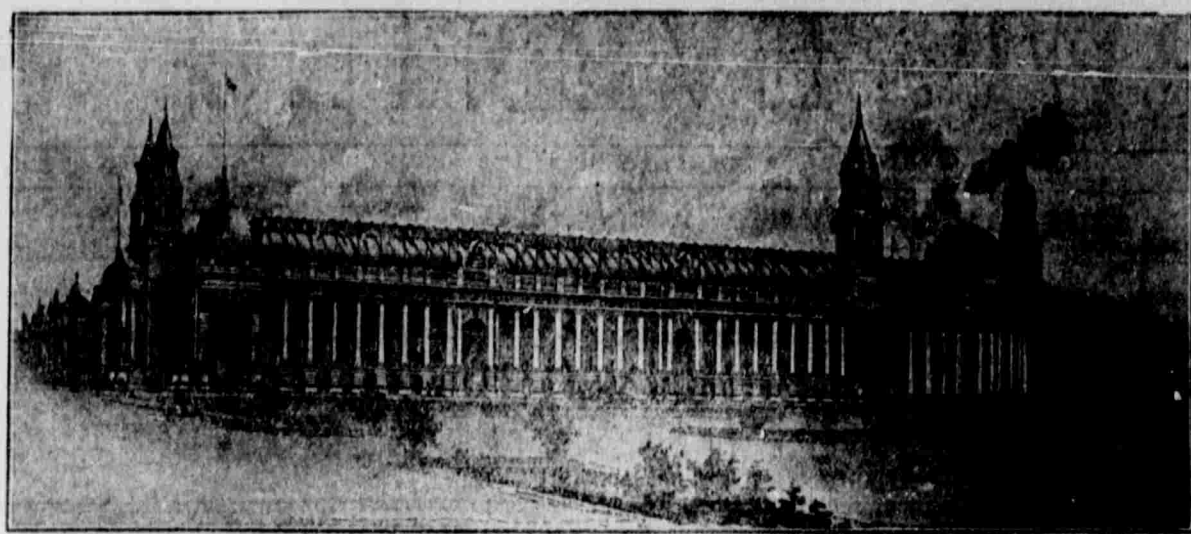
The argument is heard that expositions come too frequently. There are those who hold that America should not have attempted another universal exposition in the same generation that held the one at Chicago. But it should be remembered that in the ten years that have passed since that event a new generation of children has grown up; millions who were too young ten years ago to receive material benefit from attendance at an exposition are now at an impressionable age and are eager to see and learn.

The fact that the Louisiana Purchase exposition is located almost at the center of population of the United States, and at a point hundreds of miles removed from the site of any previous exposition, should be considered in estimating the influence of the world's fair. Though of course thousands of visitors will attend from far distant states and from foreign lands, the great majority of those in attendance must come from the territory within a radius of a few hundred miles of St. Louis. Comparatively few

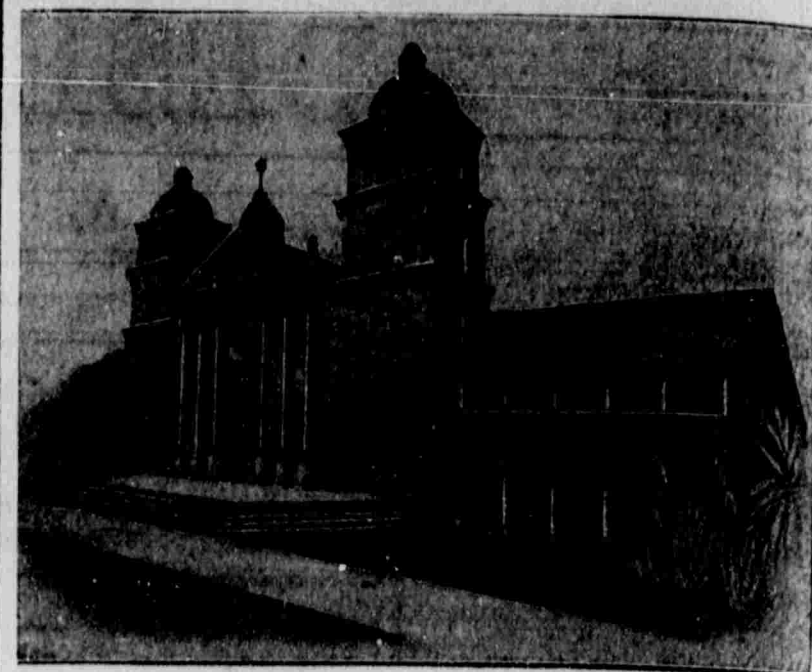
of these people ever have attended any exposition of importance, and therefore they will not be satiated with such spectacles, as some persons of globe-trotting propensities and possibilities profess to be. It is the great body of the common people—the average man and woman and child—who will benefit most largely by this enterprise. Abraham Lincoln said that God must love the common people, otherwise He would not have made so many of them. It is this vast multitude that will find in the world's fair inspiration to wider life and nobler achievement.

Treated from a purely commercial viewpoint, the benefits of the exposition are obvious. Demand is created, in a large degree, by the knowledge of supply. Backwoodsmen who never leave their native forests will continue to be contented with homespun, but the forester who comes to the cities and finds broadcloth popular will demand broadcloth. Every visitor, no matter what his station in life, will find at this exposition something—many things—of the existence of which he never knew; some of these things he will want; they will be adopted in his own family or community. Thus the demand for the world's commodities will be appreciably quickened, and one effect of the exposition will be to assist

materially in solving the problem of supply and demand. In conclusion, we may go back and apologize to John Keats; for in the final analysis the world's fair is going to be a poem—a mighty poem, with sweetening strophes and splendid flights, the ultimate epic of human achievement chastened and refined by the divine effulgence of classic grandeur; and as in its entirety it will be a thing of beauty, though perishing as to its material form ere a twelvemonth passes, we have the poet's warrant for asserting that in its influences for uplifting and ennobling the soul of the beholder it will be a joy forever.



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