

"Mr. President—Five years ago the President of the United States declared it fitting that the completion of the first century of our national existence should be commemorated by an exhibition of the natural resources of the country and their development, and of its progress in those arts which benefit mankind, and ordered that an exhibition of American and foreign arts, products and manufactures should be held under the auspices of the Government of the United States, in the city of Philadelphia in the year 1876. To put into effect the several laws relating to the exhibition, the United States Centennial Commission was constituted, composed of two commissioners from each State and Territory nominated by their respective governors, and appointed by the President. The Congress also created our auxiliary and associate corporation, the Centennial Board of Finance, whose unexpectedly heavy burdens have been nobly borne. A remarkable and paralyzing disturbance of the finances and industries of the country has greatly magnified the task, but we hope for a favorable judgment of the degree of success attained. July 4th, 1873, the ground was dedicated to its present uses. Twenty-one months ago the Memorial Hall was begun. All the other one hundred and eighty buildings within the enclosure have been erected within twelve months. All the buildings embraced in the plans of the commission itself are finished. The demands of applicants exceeded the space, and strenuous and continuous efforts have been made to get every exhibit ready in time. By general consent the exhibition is appropriately held in the City of Brotherly Love. Yonder, almost within your view stands the venerated edifice where in occurred the event this work is designed to commemorate, and the hall in which the first Continental Congress assembled. Within the