

A Century of Progress

By LOUIS G. GREGORY

The people of this second American city and what is in many ways one of the world's greatest cities are at present proving a faith, vision and courage that are wondrous and admirable. They feel that it is due their great municipal corporation to fittingly celebrate the century anniversary of its birth. For this purpose they have arranged the second World's Fair within the past 40 years.

This bears the name of A Century of Progress exposition. It seems on the face of things not their fault, but rather their misfortune, that its date should coincide with such difficult times. Even in times of prosperity such large undertakings rarely defray their expenses.

Therefore this attempt in the face of such a dearth of means is worthy of all eulogy and admiration. It is a pleasant surprise to find so good a beginning. The interest and attendance to date have been very satisfactory. What in brief compass can be said of so big an undertaking? It seems by long odds the greatest effort of its kind ever made. This is due as much to the evolution of civilization as to the virtues of its sponsors. In area and volume it is immense. Should you enter Chicago by the Michigan Central railroad from the direction of Detroit, be sure to sit on the right side of the train. There you will observe its marvelous ensemble of color and form stretching for six miles along the lake front. You will thus gain the first and a lasting idea of its magnificence. This will deepen with an exploration of the grounds with all their wonders. Ringling Brothers Circus is advertised as the greatest show on earth. In comparison with this it would hardly be a nickel movie.

This exposition is a circus, a university, an institute of technology, an amusement park, a museum of natural history and a city of considerable size all in one. Should you add Harvard university, the Massachusetts Institute of technology, Tuskegee Institute, some great industrial plant and Coney Island together and multiply that sum by perhaps two or three, you may form some idea of its dimensions. Or if your childish dream of fairyland with its elves, sylphs and gnomes could be multiplied by a hundred thousand, perhaps you could picture in your mind's eye this great fairyland of American life. Yet these are but the hasty impressions of a traveler which in the absence of scientific measurements may be exaggerated. Yet they may be at least useful in conveying the impression of vastness in enterprise.

BUILDINGS GIVE A DIVERSITY OF COLORS

The many hundreds of buildings in color and form are as varied as the

chromes, tints and shades of nature, yet containing the spirit of unity and harmony within. The attendants, guards and workmen are as polite and deferential as Frenchmen and many of them seem already as busy as bees. Their leader and the president of the exposition is Rufus Dawes, one of two brothers of the more famous Gen. Charles Dawes, banker, former vice president and former ambassador. The latter is named as one of the founders and is doubtless the power behind the throne. The Dawes brothers all have the reputation for breadth and progressiveness and freedom from racial prejudice. The general smokes like General Grant and swears like a pirate, when riled. But for all that he is a jolly good fellow. The Colored and others who are his neighbors in Evanston appear to think him adorable. He gives people a square deal and lives above the littleness of prejudice. The plea of the Colored people that all visitors to the great fair should be courteously treated appears to have won results. As far as observation goes we can see no signs of discrimination because of color in service.

In this big show may be found almost every helpful and elevating influence and ideal. It is on a much higher plane than that of 40 years ago. Those who look for cleanliness will find it. Here stands the great Hall of Science, where both industrial and scientific organizations unfold their treasures of research, relief and education. Here, too, is the Hall of the Social Sciences with its story of man's rise, the totem pole, Maya temple, Indian villages and other wonders. Here may also be seen the Havline Oil giant thermometer, the Atlantic and Pacific carnival, with its beautiful music and human-like marionettes. Various foreign nations such as China, Italy, Great Britain, Norway, Morocco and Denmark have their buildings, as has also the American government, with its various administrative departments and the court and displays of states. The Food and Agriculture building, the Hall of Religion and General Motors building, in the last of which the sightseer can see the crude raw material entering the factory, can trace it all its way until it becomes a motor car in which he may ride away; these and altogether about 50 other free shows when once one is within the gates, seem far cleverer and more wonderful than chapters from the Arabian Nights. It is hard to imagine a better investment for 50 cents! For amusements one may hobnob with animals that lived on earth millions of years ago, view them as alive and full of action and hear the startling din of the bellows and howls. There are reproductions of Belgium and other foreign lands, the midway and its bizarre attractions and the towering sky-ride.

AND NOW A TOUCH OF THE DEEPER SHADES

Of special interest to Colored people is the display of the Negro republic of Santo Domingo, which graces this great exposition with a memorial bridge in honor of the great discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus. There is also in the entertainment section the Old Plantation show, in which 50 Colored entertainers, carefully selected, with a brass band, comedians, singers and dancers, both have and give a festive time. But the special interest in this direction is found in the interior department of the government's exhibit, where that national institution, Howard university, is a unique display. It is a small movie which reveals big things, in the past, present and future. The beginning, growth and expansion through the building program which began in 1923, descriptions of the 11 departments with students in different fields of concentration and research; the athletic field, library, campus boys' glee club, girls' glee club, cuts of the great founder, Gen. O. O. Howard, and the present executive, Dr. M. W. Johnson, and a vision of the future so that it will become the truly national university of all America. Be sure to see what inspires so much hope.

It is a fine investment in education to see this big show. It is almost the equivalent of a trip abroad, combined with a visit to many American cities. There is much to eat, from "hot dogs," which only a prize-fighter or an ostrich can digest, to a course dinner, all politely served at low cost. This is in part due to the laws of Illinois, which forbids discrimination in public places and partly to the vigilance of the local Race people, who, led by The Chicago Defender, have waged a stirring battle for equal rights.

The American's way of turning everything he can into a joke sometimes fills the foreigner with sore amazement. An Englishman said: "And those Americans asked me if I would have a hot doggie. But I told them that under no circumstances would I eat a doggie, either hot or cold!"

If you reach Chicago now you will have a warm reception in more ways than one. It is a perfect inferno of heat, the hottest June since official records have been kept. But, of course, this will not last! When college boys were swapping lies, one used to relate a tradition of its being so hot in his town that the chickens had to be fed on cracked ice to prevent them from laying hard-boiled eggs. At any rate we shall soon be en route to New Hampshire, if God be pleased.

The girl stood on the burning deck,
But for her fate you need not grieve!

Unlike her more phlegmatic brother,
She had the common sense to leave!