

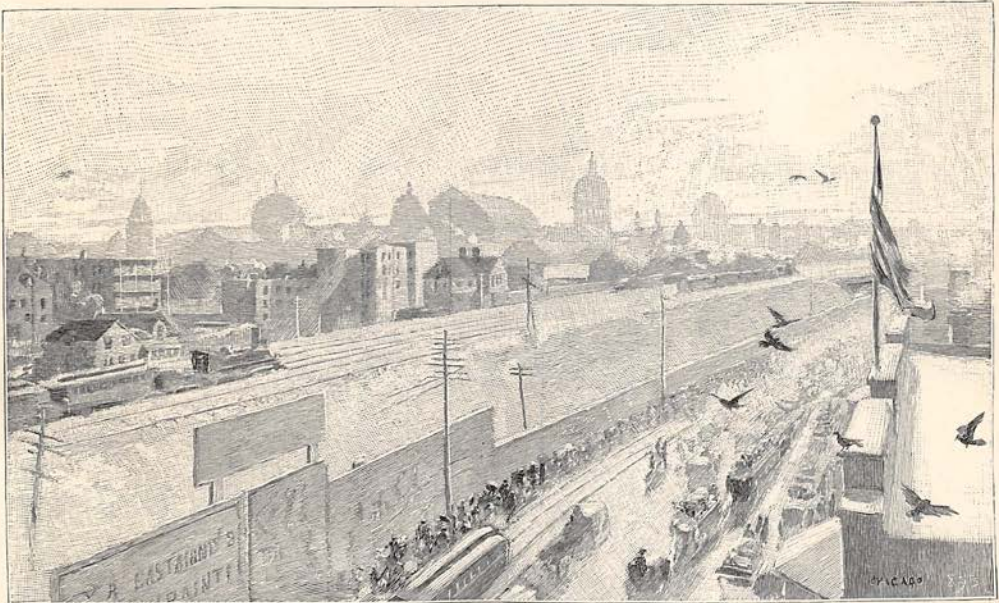
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

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No. 1.

AT THE FAIR.



DRAWN BY A. CASTAGNE.

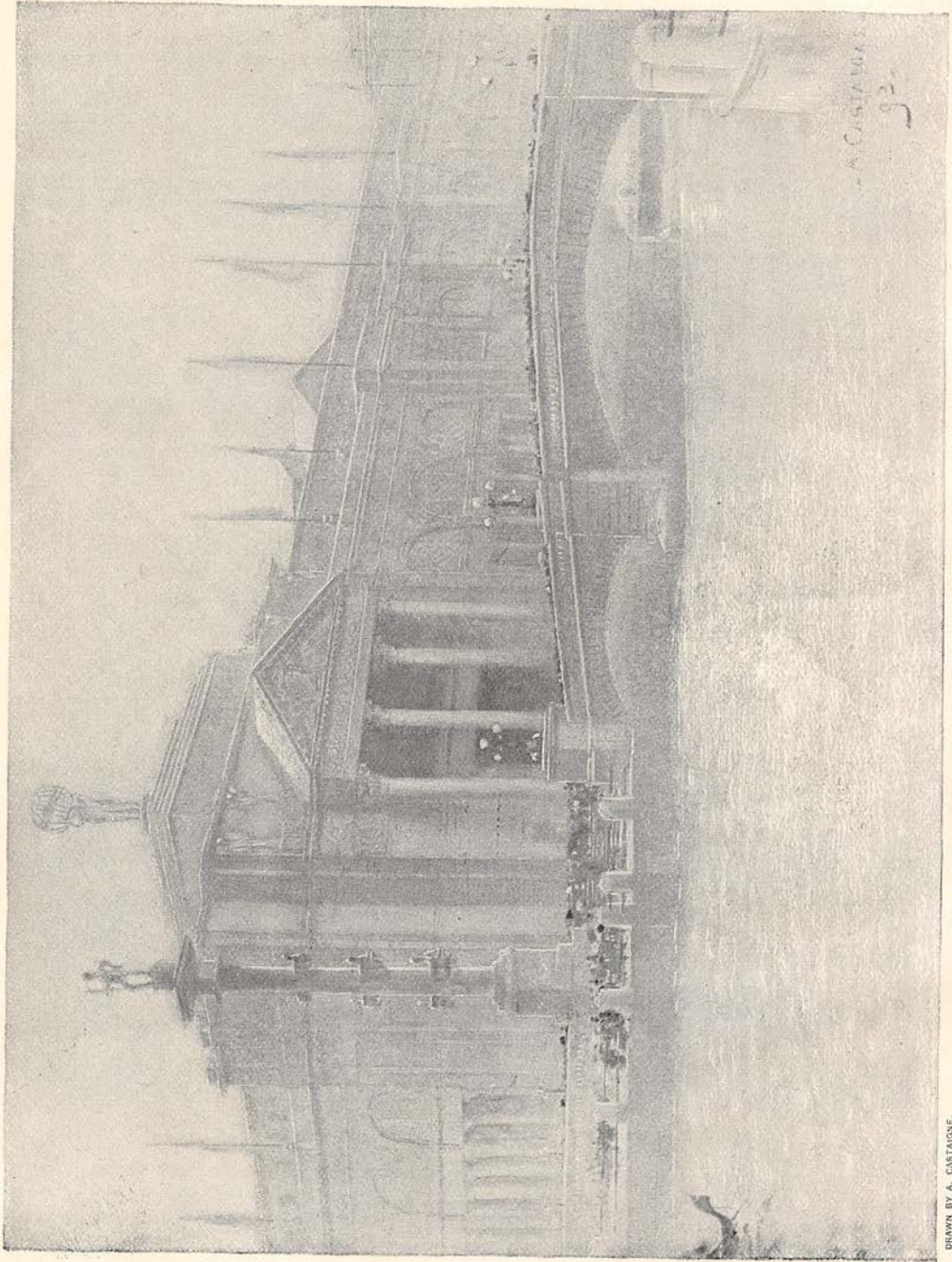
THE WORLD'S OBJECTIVE IN THE SUMMER OF 1893.

ENGRAVED BY M. HAIDER.

TWO years ago Chicago was beginning to put up the buildings for her Fair. "Absurd!" cried America; "ten-acre, twenty-acre lots roofed in—how can they ever be filled?" Yet, of late, up and down the land has gone the cry of the disappointed exhibitor, shorn of his hoped-for quantum of space. The East has called out to the West, "You are

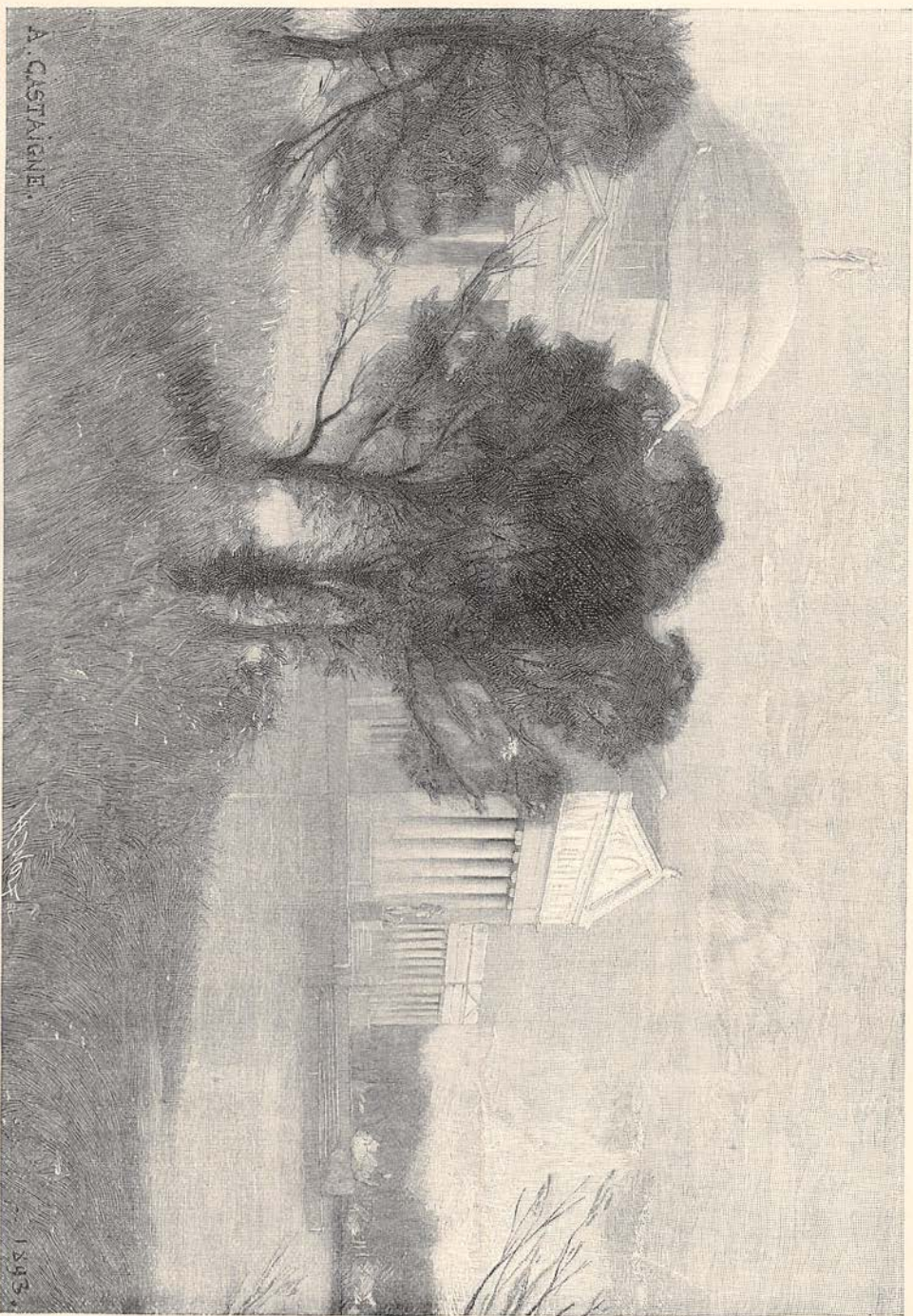
keeping it all for yourself"; the West has replied to the East, "You want to crowd us out entirely"; and the fact is that there has been no space at all for many claimants, and not nearly enough to satisfy the more fortunate. The mass of offered exhibits has surpassed the utmost anticipations of the organizers of the Fair; and indeed they would have been a

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DRAWN BY A. CASTAGNE.

THE AGRICULTURAL BUILDING — TOWARD EVENING.



A. CASTAIGNE.

1845.

THE ART PALACE — EARLY MORNING.

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

ENGRAVED BY HENRY WOLF.

great deal happier if it had been a great deal smaller.

And now has come the time for the crowd of spectators. Long ago we stopped asking, "Who will wish to go to a Fair at Chicago?" To-day the question is, "What may we best do, what may we best choose to look at, when we get there?" Of course no one can see the whole of a Fair like this, inside and out; and time, energy, and disappointment will be saved if a plan of campaign is prepared in advance, and the mind is trained to feel that it must be followed.

It is not easy to follow any plan in such sight-seeing if one has the usual American mind, as alive with mere curiosity as it is with a craving for instruction—pleased to look at anything, discontented only to think that other people are seeing things with which it cannot make acquaintance. But a plan, and the power to stick to it, will be your only safeguards from disaster if, beneath your shifting, purposeless wish simply to see, there lies a genuine desire to profit by sights of a certain sort. If you are going to enjoy your visit to the Fair in the way that will leave the best residuum, that will best satisfy you when the prickings of mere rivalry in sight-seeing have died out, when the excitement of crowds and vast architectural panoramas will have faded, when the temptation to sit in the shade on a plausibly marble bench under a deceptively marble colonnade, and watch the sun shine on fluttering flags and party-colored awnings and reaches of shining water, will seem, in the retrospect, to have been a devil's drug narcotizing your sense of duty—if you are a conscientious person with a real practical interest in any one department of the Fair, you must take at least part of your pleasure in the Fair very sternly.

I know whereof I speak, for I went to Paris in 1889 with an insistent need to acquaint myself with modern art. I stayed five weeks; I did not go every day to the Fair, but I went very often; I tried to do my duty, and I did devote myself especially to the art galleries: but while I hardly saw the contents of any of the other buildings, and did not even set foot within so vast and varied and interesting a one as the Palace of the Liberal Arts, I left Paris with a sense of shame and defeat. I did not really see the pictures and statues; I did not really learn about modern art.

Nor, at Chicago, will you learn about the things which are dear to you unless you are very wise and steady, patient and self-denying. Take a day first to satisfy your curiosity, to gratify your sense of wonderment and your love of beauty, to get your bearings and discover how much exertion you can support.

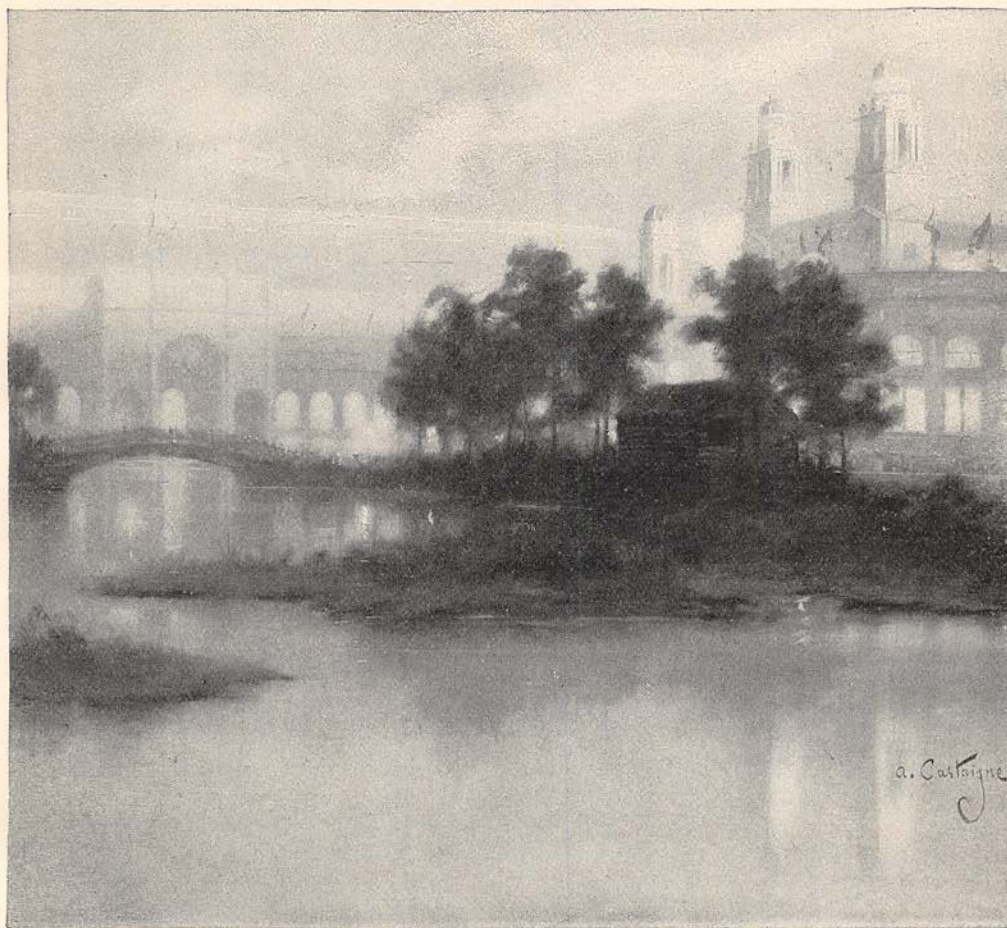
Go all over the Fair grounds, and to the top of at least one of the big domes or towers. See the Fair, as a Fair, from its various centers, and from different parts of its circumference, especially from the lake. I think you can do this in one or two days, if you start early and end late, if you are strong, and if you have yourself conveyed by all available means of conveyance,—encircling railways, boats, and rolling-chairs,—and if you do not step inside a single building except for the ascent in search of your bird's-eye view. Then go home, stay in bed the following day, if you are wise, and the next day spread the wings and stiffen the spine of your conscience, and go in search of the things you have come to study—steam-boilers or roses, fishes or stuffed birds, needlework or statistics of idiot asylums, methods of slaughtering men or cattle, or of preserving human life or edible fruits. Stay at this task until you have finished it, or until it has exhausted your powers of application. Then release and relax yourself. Go to see something else—palms if you have been studying plows, pictures if you have been studying electric motors. The things you know least about, and care least about, will then seem delightful, for you will have purchased the right to idle, and only its purchasers know the whole of the charm of idling. There are few pleasures like looking at things in which one feels no concern after looking with profit at those which concern one deeply. There is no exultation like the cry of the spirit when, tired but self-approving, it says to itself, "It does n't matter an atom whether I understand this or not, whether I remember it always or forget it to-night." If you take your idling first and your working afterward, you will miss, I say, the fullness of the pleasure of desultory looking, and you will probably never get to your working at all in such an idler's paradise as our Fair will be.

Of course, after what your rustic fellow-countrymen would call a "good spell" of idling you will be ready to come back, refreshed, to your work again. Or, if you have completed it, you will go home with the satisfactory feeling that you have enjoyed both sides of the Fair, its instructive side and its mere pleasure-giving side.

One more word: While you are trying to work,—to learn, to appraise, to remember, to profit,—be by yourself, or be sure that your comrade is exactly of the same mind as yourself. The Fair will be a safe place, and there will be so many people in it that no one individual will be annoyingly observed. You need not fear to part from your wife for a time, or, on the other hand, to let your husband part from you. Each of you has special tastes, spe-

cial curiosities ; and if you try, hand in hand, to examine ethnological antiquities and dolls dressed to represent the changes of fashion, or sporting goods and kindergarten methods, neither of you will see what you should as you should, and both will be dissatisfied. Every woman knows that two women shopping together do not "accomplish" half as much as

Most Americans, I think, will go to the Fair with some serious purpose before them—if not to study carefully any of the collections, then to make a careful general survey of the Fair itself, as illustrating the present condition of our nation from many points of view, and likewise its promises and prospects for the future. The desire for self-instruction is a very broad,



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

A CONTRAST OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE—EARLY MORNING.

though they had shopped separately, while their tempers are doubly tried. The crowded galleries of the Fair will be like colossal shops with the counters for different wares sometimes a mile apart. If you want to accomplish anything there, you had better try by yourself. It is delightful to study interesting things just as one chooses; but although I have experienced both fates, I do not know which is more exasperating—to drag an unsympathetic soul about with you while examining anything, or to be an unsympathetic soul dragged about by some one else.

bright thread in the mixed fabric of the American temperament, and the organizers of the Fair have done well, even from the advertiser's standpoint, to lay particular stress upon its educational possibilities.

Nevertheless, not all Americans have minds which are eager for new knowledge. There must be many who do not intend to visit Chicago because of any profit they may gain. They are going because they hope to amuse themselves. They, too, will have their reward. They, too, have been prepared for in manifold ways. Perhaps they will spend less time within the



A. CASTIGNO - CHICAGO, 93.

DRAWN BY A. CASTIGNE.

ENGRAVED BY H. E. SILVESTER.

VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM THE DOME OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING—JUST BEFORE SUNSET.

A. CASTAGNONE, 1895.



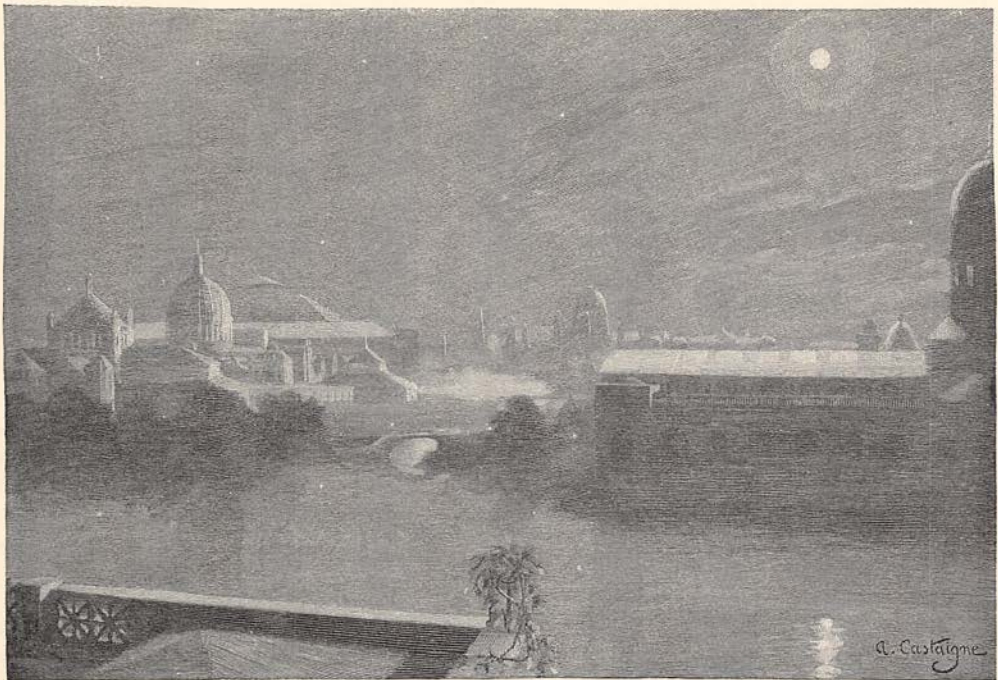
DRAWN BY A. CASTAGNONE.

THE GOLDEN DOORWAY AND PART OF THE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING—ON A QUIET AFTERNOON.

ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

true boundaries of the Fair than in the great annex called the Midway Plaisance, where a merely commercial ingenuity has been allowed fuller sway. Here, however, they will see many amusing, strange, or beautiful sights, some of

longingly of one of its quieter chambers. It tires and distresses them even to imagine this vast *table d'hôte des nations*, where preparation has been made for the daily entertainment of some two hundred thousand guests.



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

ENGRAVED BY P. AITKEN.

VIEW LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE TOP OF THE WOMAN'S BUILDING — BY MOONLIGHT.

which have hitherto been visible only in far odd corners of the world, while others have never before been seen at all. Here, I say, the most frivolous may disport themselves well; and they will carry home some instruction, if only in the shape of a wider knowledge of possible kinds of entertainment.

But even these two classes do not include all Americans. Some — chiefly born at the East, I think — have voices which refuse to join in the general chorus of anticipation. Although never so well assured that the Fair will be a "great success," they declare that the last thing they want to do is to visit it. They profess themselves *flâneurs* by nature — or by diligent cultivation. They know all they need to know about the world's progress in all directions, or they think that further knowledge would be bought too dearly by a long journey, probable discomfort, much fatigue, and a constant mingling with crowds. When their daily tasks do not claim them, what they crave is repose, refreshment, freedom from mental no less than from physical effort. When they seek their summer pleasuring they want to take their ease in the world's great inn, and so they think

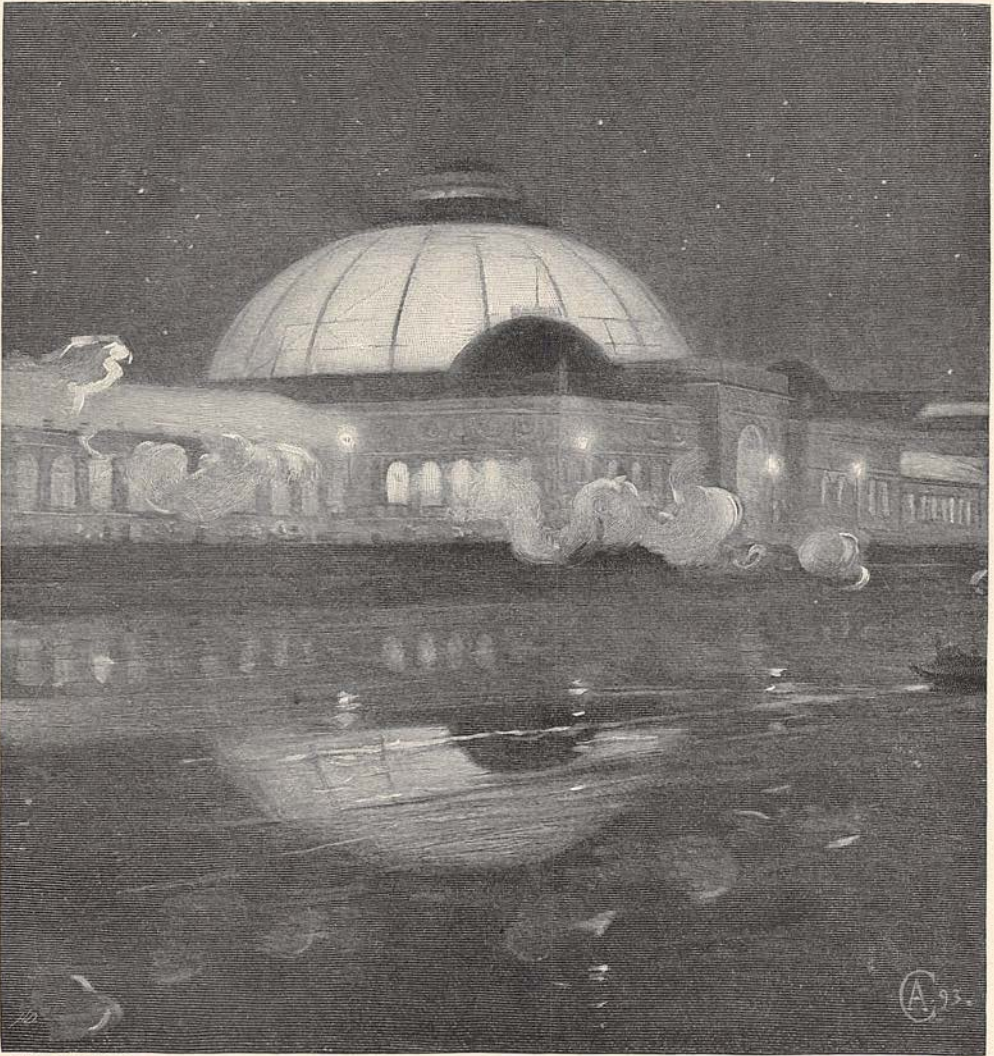
Perhaps they visited "the Centennial" in 1876, and found it crude and ugly, confused and confusing, tiresome as well as tiring. Perhaps they visited the Paris Exposition in 1889, and found it so gay and charming that, they think, no other exhibition can give them new emotions of pleasure. Or perhaps it is only on general principles that they say they dislike big exhibitions, hate sight-seeing, detest the name of a catalogue, and think any object deprived of its charm by being placed in a collection. But in any case they protest that the Fair's chief value in their eyes is the value of a huge magnet which will draw off the crowds from other places, leaving them more in peace for their peaceful pleasure-seeking.

Often such people take great pride in their apathy. They think that it is banal to want to do what every one else is doing; and they say to themselves that it is not lack of intelligence which keeps them away from Chicago, but an especially keen degree of intelligence; they say that they can amuse and instruct themselves, and therefore need not try to profit by the biggest object-lessons, the showiest illustrative panoramas, the most emphatic

lecturing to the eye, the most stupendous variety-show, that the times afford.

But such people, if they are true *flâneurs*, will make a great mistake in keeping away from Chicago. Of course there are dawdlers of an inferior sort, people who are simply stu-

impressions. He likes to idle in the city because, if he keeps himself purely receptive, the city prints each instant a fresh picture on his brain; or to idle in the country because nature, or the contemplation of his own soul, more slowly does the same. He loathes the



DRAWN BY A. GASTAIGNE.

DOME OF THE HORTICULTURAL BUILDING—BY NIGHT.

ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

pid, and can enjoy nothing but doing and thinking nothing; and it makes no difference whether these go to Chicago or stay at home. But your true *flâneur* feels a genuine interest in one thing—his own capacity for the reception of such new ideas and emotions as may be received without exertion of any kind. He does not care for facts or objects as such, or for what they teach, but he does care for their momentary effect upon his eyes and nerves. He does not crave knowledge, but he delights in

thought of Chicago, because it suggests hard work at sight-seeing, and his ideal is the easy work of holding himself passive yet perceptive.

But he loathes this thought either because he does not know what the Fair will be, or, more probably, because he has some little shred of the true American intellectual conscience in his make-up. It is hard for an American to get wholly rid of the feeling that he ought to improve himself. If his intellectual conscience is not potent enough to turn him into a worker,



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE

FRENCH'S STATUE OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE PERISTYLE—AN HOUR AFTER SUNRISE.

it suffices to hamper his pleasure as an idler. He is perfectly happy only where every one else is idling too, and, therefore, much more often in Europe than at home.

But, if you belong to this guild, you had better stifle your mental conscientiousness altogether for a time, and go to the Fair. Certainly

it will torment you if you take any last remnant of it with you; but if you go in perfect freedom, you will find such an idler's paradise as was never dreamed of in America before, and is not equaled anywhere in Europe to-day.

If, I say, you go wholly conscienceless,—not like a painstaking draftsman, but like a hu-

man kodak, caring only for as many pleasing impressions as possible, not for the analyzing of their worth,—you will be delighted in the first place by the sight of such crowds of busy human bees, and the comfortable thought that, thank heaven! you are not as they. And what a setting for these crowds! What a panorama of beauty to drink in and dream over, and to carry home, in general views and bits of detail, for the perpetual adornment of your mental picture-gallery!

You need not avail yourself of all the quick means of getting about. You can hire a little boat for yourself, if you choose, and drift slowly around all day in this new white Venice of the West; or, when the sun beats too hot through your awning, land on the island, be refreshed by green shrubberies, and fancy yourself lolling in true gardens of Japan. Or, not caring whither you go or when you get there, you can saunter about on foot, on sunny marble *quais* or canopied bridges, in sound of splashing fountains, along great shadowy arcades of columns, pausing at last under palm-trees beneath the tropic dome of Flora's temple, or in the veranda of some little rest-house on the esplanade where the brilliant stretches of Lake Michigan will give your imagination room and verge enough to convince you that you have passed out of the old workaday world altogether—that you are looking from this great palatial bit of fairy-land into a further realm of mystery and marvel. If the beautiful in nature especially appeals to you, Lake Michigan will indeed furnish you with fine emotions, exquisite sensations. There is no water like it in more eastern regions. It has twenty moods for one that the ocean shows; and compared with the famous lakes of Europe, it is like a string of many precious stones—beryls, opals, amethysts, aquamarines—compared with a single sapphire.

But if you like best to win from humanity your changing vague delights, you will have it before you in great plenty and variety, against astonishing piled-up backgrounds of commercial products, mechanical marvels, artistic elaborations, which you can placidly contemplate as backgrounds, not trying to appraise their monetary, scientific, or artistic worth. Or if you care particularly for esthetic impressions, these you will get in wonderful reaches of architectural magnificence, emphasized by the shifting lights and shadows of a variable but sometimes almost tropic climate, accented by gay passages of color, enlivened by the flutter of a myriad

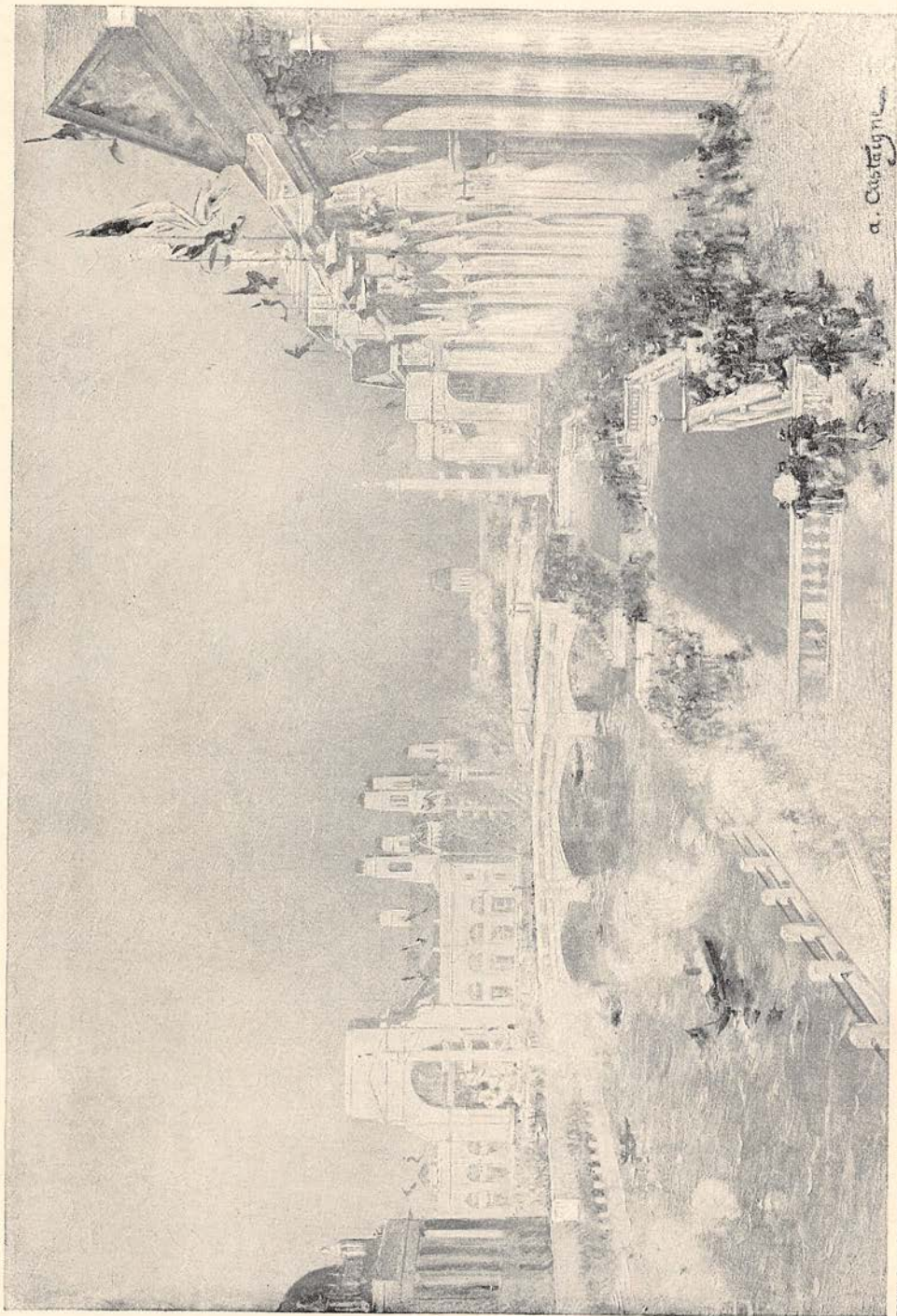
flags and awnings, and everywhere doubled in beauty by their reflection in the waters which, after all, are not the waters of Venice, since they are pure and blue; and these marvelous panoramas, again, you can accept at their high pictorial worth, not troubled, like the critic or the student, by the need to appraise, consider, and recollect.

Something of what you, a happy idler, may perpetually enjoy at the Fair our artist has tried to show, telling of its colossal effectiveness by night as well as by day, and giving glimpses from those quieter points of outlook which will stand in picturesque contrast to the showier, gayer panoramas. If, this artist tells us in his pictures, Turner would have found good material in certain places, Corot would have found as good elsewhere. Indeed there is no artist concerned with interminglings of natural and architectural beauty, or with human beings of modern types, who would not be enchanted by the opportunities of our Fair. One wishes only that during its short six-months' life it might be painted by as many hands as, in the last four centuries, have painted the Italian Venice; and one feels sure that no two painters who may attempt the task are likely to paint the American Venice in identical ways.

I have always wished for a chance to celebrate a certain friend of mine who, with great trouble, got himself a holiday and journeyed from the far West to see the Centennial Exhibition. He arrived on a very hot day; near the entrance of the grounds he found a Hungarian band playing delightfully in a delightful little restaurant; there he sat down for mental and physical refreshment; there he sat all day; and thither he returned each subsequent day during his hard-earned week of leisure, and sat till eventide. He saw no more of the exhibition than this, but he still declares that he got "more good" out of it than any one else, and looks back upon it with feelings of unmixed self-approval.

He, indeed, was a true *flâneur*. People of his kind will probably be tempted at Chicago to do a little more than he did at Philadelphia; there will be so many enchanting spots for placid contemplation that they will not remain for a week in one. But if they really are of his kind, they will not be tempted into over-exertion, or disturbed by the conscientious activity of others; and the longer they stay, the oftener they pitch their mental camera on a new spot, the richer will be their feeling of pleasure and self-approval in after days of retrospection.

M. G. Van Rensselaer.



THE WORLD'S FAIR—LOOKING NORTH FROM LION FOUNTAIN.

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.