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Influence of the World's Fair.

C. Grant Leaver, '94.

The influence of a thing
is the measure of its greatness.
When we consider that the World's
Fair was held in America's
greatest inland city,
situated in the very heart
of what is destined to be
the foremost nation of the globe,
situated on one of the most
beautiful and picturesque
as well as one of the greatest
of America's Great Lakes;
when we consider that it
was the grandest spectacle
the world ever knew; when
we consider that it was
the greatest, the most

gigantic undertaking of its kind ever successfully completed, we may have some faint idea of the formidous influence which it must have exerted.

This great exposition was the celebration of four centuries of history, and as we behold it we stand entranced with the grandeur of achievements, inspired by the majesty of events, and enchanted by the very sight of this phantom city, phantom-like in color, and phantomlike in the suddenness with which it appeared before the eyes of man. We find its

buildings, palaces; its grounds
and gardens, its lakes, lagoons
and islands a picture of
fairylane, looking as if it had
been summoned into existence
by the magic wand of an
enchantress. We are almost
awestricken as we stand
in the shadows of these
majestic temples of art.
They teach us that art is
more godlike than science,
for while science discovers,
art creates. Every branch of
every science and of every
art seems to have been laid
under contribution in the

achievement of these marvellous results. A new era in American art is inevitable on account of the educated taste of the great mass of visitors, and of artists who have not had the advantage of foreign travel.

These works of art, upon which we gazed with profound admiration, spoke and were speaking a universal language, and imparted a lasting pleasure. They appeal to our highest powers and awake our noblest emotions. They induce the power of reflection and inspire us with the majesty of the creative faculty. They lead

us to appreciate more fully than ever Lytton's definition of art: "The effort of man to express the ideas suggested to him by nature, of a power above nature, whether that be within the recesses of his own being, or in that great first power, of which nature like himself, is but an effect."

The influence of this exposition on commerce is of prime importance. Lord Bacon says, "There are three things which make a nation great and prosperous, a fertile soil, busy workshops, and easy conveyance for men

and goods from place to place." But that commerce may be successful today conveyance must not only be easy, it must be rapid as well. The World's Fair in exhibiting the most magnificent engines of modern building, which with their seven-foot driving-wheels tower like giants above the originals; in exhibiting modern steam ships whose hulls rise sixty or seventy feet into the air, significant in the strength and perfection of engineering, in the splendor of its furnishings, and in the skill shown in

the construction of its parts, of every modern art; in exhibiting a model of an electric car with a cone-shaped electric motor at either end, resting between wheels which are ten feet in diameter and steadied by pairs of horizontal wheels pressing against third or fourth rails for the purpose of security, and intended to cover distance at the rate of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles per hour, gives to the world ample means for carrying on the commercial interests of all nations both

on land and sea. The articles there on exhibition revealed to every nation products hitherto unknown. Every bounty of nature, every magnificence of architecture, and every creation of art could there be seen. He discovered that many of our virtues were equaled and surpassed by countries that we know little of, and this discovery makes us more modest and at the same time more anxious for friendly and commercial intercourse with them.

The Ferris wheel showed

most conclusively the possibilities which may be attained by a master mind when coupled with an undaunted will.

The Columbian Commissioners desired to have some feature of the exposition that should surpass the Eiffel tower of the Paris Exposition in 1890.

They demanded that it be something entirely new in engineering science, something that would be a radical departure from anything hitherto attempted.

Mr. Ferris was equal to the occasion and gave to the world one of the greatest wonders

of this century of wonders. This not only shows what may be achieved by honest effort, it serves also as an incentive to others.

A few weeks spent at the World's Fair is equivalent to a trip around the entire circuit of the globe. There we met the peoples of all nations, we heard their language and their music, we saw their faces and familiarized ourselves with their manners and their customs. There we were carried back four hundred years in history. We saw

upon land the reproduced monas-
tery of La Rabida; upon water
the historic caravels, those brave
little crafts, frail in structure
and diminutive in size, yet
which rode the waves long
enough to penetrate the
mysteries of the seas, to
reconstruct the map of the
world, and shed upon
the gloom of the dark ages
the light of a modern civili-
zation; those vessels which
brought to our shores the
illustrious navigator who
broke the shackles of superstition,
calmed the fears of timid men

and gave a new world to
commerce, to science, and to
civilization. From the progress
made in the past who can
tell how far this giant
republic will four hundred
years hence dominate the
policy of the world.

Let us see what the
Fair means. The community
of earth, the linking together
in common association of
the peoples of the world, enabling
them to realize what is the better
for them to know and what
errors to avoid. The flying to and
fro of the shuttles of the nations:

loom were weaving a closer
brotherhood; they were weaving
the garments of a better, a
purer civilization. They were
linking the past to the present,
and weaving into living
possibilities, the dreams of
enthusiasts, the visions of
seers, the voices of prophecy.
They were weaving shrouds
for old fads and ancient
superstition.

The influence of this com-
mingling of races upon
the lofty plane of human
achievements and progress,
of the commingling of clashing

creeds in the congress of
religions, carried by representatives
there present to all parts of
the habitable globe, must
result in nobler aspirations
and greater efforts for
the friendship of nations
and the harmony of
the world.

1894 Senior Oration of C. Grant Cleaver, Class of 1894

Transcribed by Krista Gray, September 2008

Edited by Meg MacAvoy, September 2008

Influence of the World's Fair

The influence of a thing is the measure of its greatness. When we consider that the World's Fair was held in America's greatest inland city, situated in the very heart of what is destined to be the foremost nation of the globe, situated on one of the most beautiful and picturesque as well as one of the greatest of America's Great Lakes; when we consider that it was the grandest spectacle the world ever knew; when we consider that it was the greatest, the most

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and gave a new world to commerce, to science, and to civilization. From the progress made in the past who can tell how far this giant republic will four hundred years hence dominate the policy of the world.

Let us see what the Fair means. The community of earth, the linking together in common association of the peoples of the world, enabling them to realize what is the better for them to know and what errors to avoid. The flying to and fro of the shuttles of the nations'

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The influence of this commingling of races upon the lofty plane of human achievements and progress, of the commingling of clashing

creeds in the congress of religions, carried by representatives there present to all parts of the habitable globe, must result in noble aspirations and greater efforts for the friendship of nations and the harmony of the world.