

World's Exposition in the Year 2,000

A sketch which did not win the prize in the late Times-Herald competition.

Lizzie M. Holmes

1896

The sun rose and sent a burst of glory over the sparkling lake, and glittering, smokeless city, that seemed to spring out of the water itself and stretch far away toward the western sky. At the same instant, music rich, soft, all-pervading, swelled out upon the still, sweet air, strains that could be heard in all parts of the city, and whose source could not be determined by the sound; a grand succession of rich harmonies in new and inspiring modulations, whose motif was action—enthusiastic, pleasurable action. A thousand banners were flung out at once and myriads of brilliant colors glowed against the white, dazzling buildings. The morning sky with its roseate, golden and purple tints, seemed a great dome decorated for a world's festival, the earth beneath with its joyous splendor, a vast auditorium fitted up to receive the peoples of all nations. And the throngs that surged out of their houses and through the clean, noiseless streets, as the day grew brighter, warranted the thought. The Great Exposition of the World's Productions opened at daybreak.

Out on the lake itself a magnificent view rested under the clear sunlight. Wonderful constructions rose from the waters as though resting upon them, of most graceful and harmonious shapes and formed of a shining material resembling silver intermingled with a bright crystal substance. They extended along the lake shore for a distance of two miles and were connected with the land by hundreds of delicate looking but strong, arched bridges. Around every structure were wide, smooth walks, shaded by graceful awnings whose light supports were twined with luxuriant vines and flowers. Innumerable boats of various sizes and shapes glided over the water between the buildings, without noise or smoke or any visible motive power. Broad, white steps led down to the water at short intervals. Over all, there rested an air of cheerfulness and pleasing activity that set every heart to beating high with happiness and expectation.

The principal avenue to the exposition buildings was a magnificent, great bridge built of marble, silver and several new and wonderful compositions in building material. The floor was firm, yet not too hard and unyielding and gave back no sound to footstep or wheel. Grand pillars supported a majestic archway which spanned the structure; above the arch stood an imposing statue—a figure of lofty proportions, and perfect symmetry, with limbs indicative of marvelous strength and suppleness, a splendid head set proudly upon massive shoulders, and hands that seemed to quiver with power and eagerness to act. A heap of broken chains lay at his feet, and a beautiful, penetrating light glowed from a crown on his forehead.

The statue represented the "Spirit of Industry." The crowds of people pouring through the grand entrance way, appeared happy, prosperous and genial. There was no distinguishing classes by the quality or style of dress, the variety displayed was simply from the differences in taste, and all were gracefully, lightly, and comfortably clad.

It would be vain to endeavor to describe the manifold productions displayed in the liberal arts building and other departments. There were all kinds of furniture and decorative ware formed of gold, silver, crystal, aluminum and manufactured materials as pliable, glittering and durable as gold; there were tapestries, draperies and robes of silk, spun glass, spider's web, and a wondrously fine artificial fiber; and hundreds of marvelous, ingenious contrivances for man's comfort and convenience which were new even to the people of the new century and would be inexplicable to those of the old nineteenth. All were displayed in the most artistic and enticing manner possible to the advanced mind and skill of man.

The visitors moved about in rolling chairs which went forward by pressing a button and could be guided by pushing a lever, and in small cars that floated about over the heads of the people on the floor, or they walked about as they felt inclined. Passengers arrived on the grounds by pneumatic cars, air ships, surface and submarine boats impelled by a newly-discovered force which required little machinery and was very light.

While the exhibitions from the various parts of the world were divided off and marked by the names of the countries from which they came, the most prominent inscriptions were the names of the associations and numbers of branches from which the articles were sent. An exhibit was from such and such an association, Branch Number —, and inconspicuously, the old name of the country where it was made was added. Members of said branches did not always live in the countries named but simply held their connection with the branch, wherever they might be. Very little attention was paid to boundary lines, so widespread and general had grown the spirit of internationalism and fraternity. There were no monarchies or empires and only one or two distant divisions that still called themselves "republics." People belonged to societies, groups, industrial associations, etc., and these constituted the principal organization of general society. Here and there were individuals who refused to join anything and so long as these invaded no one, they were left alone in their glory. There were no taxes, no cornered and controlled "mediums of exchange" and all the producers of the earth freely and equitably exchanged their productions.

The machinery and transportation buildings, showed what marvelous strides in these arts had taken place in the last century. Transportation had reached such perfection that people no longer lived huddled together in huge cities. The cities were simple centers of industry, with large association hotels or homes, and places of amusement scattered through them, for the convenience of those who wished to remain there any length of time. The real homes were situated in the pleasantest places, among mountains, hills, and wooded vales, on the banks of picturesque streams, and along the shores of lovely lakes. No twenty story buildings existed except a few old ruins preserved as curiosities. Buildings were two, three or four stories high according to the style of architecture.

Machinery performed every sort of disagreeable, dangerous or tedious labor; but many kinds of work had been rescued from the machine, and now furnished pleasant and artistic occupation and recreation for men, women and children. In one of the machinery halls, newspapers containing the world's news condensed, were issued every half hour, while in every city, duplicates were issued almost instantaneously by means of an electrical process. The more elaborate literature, such as articles on philosophy, science, history, economics, and articles of fiction were

reserved for magazine publications and issued every three or four days. The various processes of sympathetic telegraphy were elaborately displayed—wires were no longer stretched between distant points as means of swift communication.

One large building was devoted to relics and curiosities of the nineteenth century. Here were seen the horse car, steam engine, printer's case, the old-fashioned arc and incandescent lights, gas-fixtures, etc. One vast hall, designated "A Chamber of Horrors" contained old methods of punishments, small models of penitentiaries and jails, of the electrocution chair, the gallows, the guillotine, etc. And also old implements of warfare were shown. Some of the guns exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in 1894 as perfect specimens of destructive machinery, were shown; torpedoes, bombs, models of war ships, war balloons were displayed as curious relics of a half-enlightened time. There had been no wars for a hundred years. The last great conflict had occurred in 1900 when it was proved that massed armies were of no use whatever and could be utterly annihilated in two minutes, that rulers, kings and generals were in as great danger wherever they might place themselves, as were the front ranks of soldiers on ancient battlefields; that cities, forts, and war ships could be blown to atoms at a moment's notice; then the people began to think they must settle their differences in some other way than by destroying each other. Rulers no longer declared war when they must share the danger, and the common people would no longer fight each other over questions in which they had no interest.

As genuine exhibits of skill and ingenuity, none but those of peaceful, industrious, educational or progressive nature were shown. No articles of warfare, conquest, authority or exploitation were seen except in this one collection of terrible, old curiosities.

Among the many useful and beautiful productions, hung long lists of names of working men who had devoted unusual labor, skill, or inventive talent, or had endured extraordinary hardships, or undergone dangerous risks. Near noon a grand procession paraded through the walks; they were strong, upright, splendid specimens of humanity and were cheered by the visiting throngs as heroes of old were on returning from victorious wars. They were the workers whose intelligent exertions had brought into being the beautiful and magnificent structures around them. A great audience next assembled in a glorious auditorium where an ode to labor was sung by a magnificent chorus of voices, and addresses in honor of industry were given. Inventive talent, managing ability, designing powers were not forgotten; every creature who had performed some useful act in creating the marvels about them, was honored by appreciative mention.

And so the grandest, most universal, most peaceful exposition ever held in the history of the world, was opened for enjoyment, and the cementing of true brotherly feeling between all the peoples of the globe.

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Published in *The Rebel* 1, no. 6 (March-April, 1896): 67–68.

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