

GORDON ELIZABETH

WHAT WE SAW AT
MADAME WORLD'S FAIR

Elizabeth Gordon

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Elizabeth Gordon

What We Saw At Madame World's Fair / Being a Series of Letters From the Twins at the / Panama-Pacific International Exposition to Their Cousins / at Home

Preface

F OR many years it has been the dream of Madame World to have a canal cut through the narrow strip of land between the East and the West, so that folks might visit each other without having to go so far around.

Also she thought that one family might have something which another family might use if there were a short way to send it across.

And there were other reasons: Families should know each other, and be able to share each other's joys and sorrows.

Madame World said so much about it, that one of her older daughters tried to get the work done, without success, and, finally, Uncle Sam said, "Very well, Mother, I believe you are right about this; and though I am your very youngest son, if you will let me try, I promise you that I will cut a canal through that swampy back yard of yours, and that your biggest ships shall float safely through."

Then Madame World said: "Those are brave words, my son, but you have not taken account of the difficulties in the way. Things called Fevers lurk in the swamps ready to spring upon you, and there is also a monster whose name is Malaria."

"Nonsense, Mother mine," replied Uncle Sam, "those things are born of Fear, and I do not know Fear and will not listen to him. I will cut the canal for you."

So Madame World gave her son permission to go to work, and in a short time the work was finished, and Uncle Sam presented his lady mother with the Panama Canal.

Madame World decided to celebrate the event, and sent out invitations to her families to come to a big party which she would give. She asked them to bring their families, and their work, and their fruits and grains, and learn to know each other.

Then she looked around for a place to picnic, where this big family could be fed and housed, and where the elements were most friendly.

Away out on the edge of the Pacific Ocean she saw the golden glow of California's magic city of San Francisco, and she said, "These people have been brave under many difficulties, and they are a faithful people. They shall have the honor."

So that is why Madame World has given us this big beautiful Fair, which everybody will always remember. It is the celebration of a dream come true.

A LETTER HOME

DEAR COUSINS:

FOR weeks and months we had been reading every scrap of information we could find about the wonderful Fair which was to be given in San Francisco, the city of our dreams.

We had not even imagined that we could go to it, because mother could not come until later, and then school would be in session, so when father said that we might come with him we were more than thankful.

Mother looked a little doubtful, but father said, "Nonsense, it is no trick at all for me to take them." Madame World has sent us an invitation to her Fair and we could not think of refusing. So we came at once.

We have been so wishing that you could be here with us that father has suggested that we write you a letter every day, and tell you about some of the things that we see.

We think it is a good plan, and we shall try to make the letters as full of interest as possible, in the hope that we may show you something of it, and at the same time fix it in our own memories.

First, then, this Wonder City by the Sea is a real city, even though it does, as we heard a lady remark today, look like a poet's dream.

It has a bank, and a postoffice, a hospital, a fire department, a hotel, a street car, houses for the different families of the world to live in, and in fact about everything which any city needs.

The buildings and statuary are made of a kind of cement, called artificial travertine, tinted to look like terra cotta.

Real travertine is a pure carbonate of lime formed from dripping water which bears a lime deposit, and is found in Rome, where it is much used in building and for statuary. The imitation travertine was discovered by Mr. Paul Denneville of New York, and we have to thank him for the fact that after all day at the Fair our eyes are not in the least tired; it is due to the fact that the material is easily tinted, that Mr. Jules Guerin who composed the color scheme of the whole Fair was able to carry out his ideas.

You will remember that Mr. Guerin is the man who makes the color pictures which we have so much admired in the "Century Magazine."

The roofs are covered with artificial tiles, and the contrast between the pinkish walls and the red of the roofs makes a picture which will never be forgotten.

It seems a pity that the city cannot remain, but it is not built for permanency, father says, but is like a beautiful dream, which seems so real that the memory stays always, and that its influence will color our whole lives, and make each one of us better for having seen it.

And when we got our first glimpse of the Tower! We couldn't even say "Oh!" We just looked at each other, and then back at the Fair city, just to make sure we were not dreaming.

There was the beautiful Tower of Jewels, smiling and twinkling its shining eyes at us, and saying, "Come in, children; come in, and walk under my beautiful blue arches, and through my magic courts, and my sheltered gardens, and be happy, and love each other and all the children of the world. Peace I offer you, and Plenty, and Harmony, and Beauty. Here you are safe, and here you are welcome. Come in, my children."

So in we went. The sun was shining, the blue waters of the bay were sparkling, bands were playing, the red and yellow flags were flying in the sweet salt breezes, and the lovely white pigeons were cooing; and best of all, little white people, and little brown people, and little yellow people were here and there and everywhere, all happy and smiling and glad that they had come.

We will tell you about the Tower. It is Madame World's expression of joy and satisfaction that the Canal is finished, and it is really the key to the whole Fair. Mr. Thomas Hastings of New York

designed it. It is four hundred and forty-three feet in height, and the arch, which is the gateway to the Fair, is sixty feet wide and one hundred and ten feet high.

On the pedestals are figures of men who have made the world what it is today. There are fifty thousand jewels on the Tower, of five colors – canary, amethyst, ruby, aquamarine, and white. These were made in Austria, of a peculiar kind of sand which produces a very hard glass, called Sumatra stone, and which takes a high polish. The jewels were cut exactly like precious stones, and are called Nova Gems.

These were set in bands of metal, and suspended from hooks, each jewel with a tiny mirror back of it.

When the winds move the jewels, they catch the light, and sparkle like real gems.

At night under the illumination of the searchlights the Tower is even more beautiful than in the sunshine.

We are glad that we are going to have the memory of the Tower to take away with us.

Your loving cousins,
JANE AND ELLEN.

FESTIVAL HALL

DEAR COUSINS:

F OR Music, whom Madame World loves very much, she has provided an imposing palace worthy indeed for so great a goddess.

It has a wonderful arched entrance, with statues of mythological meanings, which father explained to us, but we liked best little Pan, who sits at the left of the entrance. He has charmed with his pipes a chameleon, who has come to his feet to listen to the music.

We often amuse ourselves by wondering how many panes of glass there are in the great dome of the hall, but father says there is no way to be sure.

But it is a very large hall, and will hold about four thousand people, and is not large enough even at that. Music has so many adorers, many of whom have made a pilgrimage to hear her, and who dislike being disappointed.

To this palace will come while the Fair lasts all the worshipers of Music, and all the world's great orchestras, with their distinguished leaders.

Even the Boston Symphony, which so seldom ever leaves its own beloved city, is here for a season.

The Goddess of Flowers and the Goddess of Music are first cousins, and so the lovely grounds are always crowded full of the dear little Flower people, standing on their tiptoes to catch the strains of music as they float out from the palace.

There are whole fields full of Pansies, in their gorgeous yellow, and brown and purple dresses, and the golden-hearted Shasta Daisies have crowded close up to the palace walls. The lovely Lady Hydrangeas, who wear a different gown for each month in the year, seem eager not to lose a note, and the dainty Heaths come hurrying and laughing up the walk from the Avenue of Palms, beckoning the baby Blue Gums across the way to come closer.

The darling naughty little California Poppies, who always go just where they please, have simply broken loose and are everywhere you go, while the Canterbury Bells, little rogues, who were expressly told to stay in their own back yard, have come out in front and cuddled themselves at the feet of the Lady Eucalyptus, who has thrown her bluish-green robe over them, so that they may stay and hear the music.

Everything around Festival Hall is harmonious and beautiful, and the glorious sunshine is over all, and the salt breezes from the bay, whose work it is to keep the air always clear and health-giving, are never idle.

Madame World was a wise mother when she chose this spot for her Fair.

*Your loving cousins,
JANE AND ELLEN.*

THE PALACE OF VARIED INDUSTRIES

DEAR COUSINS:

THE Palace of Varied Industries, where we spend a good deal of time, is a beautiful building in the old California Mission style, and has some fine doorways. The statuary used around the building is meant to say that work is honorable and desirable.

It is wonderful how many kinds of work there are in the world. We never stopped to think until we came to this Fair, that everything that is made has first to be thought out. And then all the little things that go with it have to be thought out, even to a little flower in the wall paper, or the way icing is put on a cake.

All Madame World's families have sent samples of work to this palace: There are the loveliest little hand-knitted sweater dresses for children from the Argentine, laces from Spain, cocoanut fibre hats from the Philippine Islands, wood-carvings from Switzerland, and some equally as pretty from South Carolina made by boys in a private school.

Mrs. Adelaide Robineau has some wonderful porcelains from Syracuse, New York, which are very beautiful.

We admired the jewelry; there are gems of all sorts in hand-wrought mountings, both ancient and modern.

There are wonderful opals, tinted like the gleam in a bubble, some very lustrous pearls, which you would think were worth the king's ransom which you always read about in stories, but which are made from the scales of a little three-inch fish found in Russian waters.

We nearly forgot to tell you about the silkworm exhibition. It was the thing we liked best in the whole palace. The silkworms eat a very great amount of mulberry leaves, and are most inexcusably particular about their diet, and when they are ready they go into their cocoons, and that is the last of them.

Only a few are allowed to become butterflies, but they are not pretty butterflies, anyway. When they have spun enough, and just before they would hatch and spoil the silk, they are sterilized, and then the silk can be unwound. They were doing that when we saw them, and they have a delicate machine which winds the silk into nice soft yellow skeins, ready to be woven. It is one of California's new industries, and will be more profitable as time goes on.

There are so many things to choose from, we are not able as yet to decide what we shall do.

Your loving cousins,
JANE AND ELLEN.

THE PALACE OF MACHINERY

DEAR COUSINS:

THE Palace of Machinery is just across the Avenue of Progress from the Palace of Mines, and is an imposing building of great beauty, as befits a god of so much power and importance. It covers nine acres of ground, and seems to suggest strength. Father tells us that it is the largest wooden structure in the world. He says that six million feet of lumber were required for sheathing it and four carloads of nails and fifteen hundred tons of bolts and washers were used in building it.

We found many things of interest – machines for drilling oil wells, and machines for refining the oil, machines for crushing great rocks, and machines for making roads. There were canning machines, gas engines, giant printing-presses, bookbinding machinery and all sorts of electrical devices. Father says that every machinery appliance that has been invented is shown here in completest detail.

There was a knife in one exhibit which opened and shut all by itself; it was a giant knife, and we said to each other that perhaps a gnome was making it open and shut. A little boy who was near said, “Aw! Sillies! It goes by machinery!” So then, of course, we knew!

There were some moving-picture machines in the palace, but we did not see them work, and we are going back there some day. In all the palaces they have wonderful “movies,” and sometimes we go to them while father looks at things.

We find that it is better not to get too tired, so we went and sat in the Avenue of Progress and listened to a band which was playing, until father came out, and then we came home. It was a heavy day, seeing so much massive machinery, and we were a little tired, but very glad that we had seen it all.

*Your loving cousins,
JANE AND ELLEN.*

THE PALACE OF MINES

DEAR COUSINS:

THE Palace of Mines is a most interesting Palace, built in the Spanish style, with some very fine doorways or portals.

Inside we found so many things of interest that we were quite surprised, as we had not expected to be so very much interested in mines. Father says that we came to this Fair to learn about the things in it, and mines are very important. We began to think he was right, when we saw the two big balls of gold which show where the most gold comes from, and how much is mined every year.

Gold mines are not the only kind that are valuable. So many things come from mines which we had never even wondered about before, that we wonder now at our former ignorance. Jewels of every kind come from the ground – lovely opals and diamonds, and our birthstone – the purple amethyst – and rubies, and everything but pearls. It is wonderful to think of, isn't it? We were invited to go down in a coal mine, not a real one, of course, but one which shows just how it looks. It was a bit scary down there; and always after this when we are sitting before a glowing coal fire, and perhaps popping corn over it, we shall remember that some one went down in a dark coal mine and dug it out for us. Father says that the Fair teaches us great lessons, and the best among them is to be kinder to each other.

When we came up from the coal mine we were taken into a dark room, like the ones which photographers have, and shown some radium. You have to use a sort of telescope glass, and shut one eye, and look through the lens, and there it is hopping about in the box just as though it did not enjoy a bit being shut up in there. Being so little of it in the world it is tremendously expensive.

We were glad to see that there are all sorts of ways to keep the men who work in mines well and happy now, at least compared to what there used to be, and the motto "Safety First" is all over everywhere.

The machinery for working the mines was interesting to father, but it was a little too heavy for us, so just to help us to remember that we had seen the Palace of Mines we went to a coal-mining "movie." After that we went and sat in the North Gardens and watched the ships go by until father came for us. The bay is very beautiful, and we just adore the sea-gulls. They were having a lawn party that day.

Your loving cousins,
JANE AND ELLEN.

THE PALACE OF TRANSPORTATION

DEAR COUSINS:

THERE are so many fascinating ways to travel now that we wonder why anyone stays at home.

Father observed today that if we were to travel in other countries for the same length of time that this Fair is to be kept open, that we could not possibly learn so much about the manners and customs of the people as we can by seeing the Fair. He says it is a privilege to have seen it, because before we are grown up there will not be another, and children remember such things so much more vividly than grown-up people do.

Today we went to the Palace of Transportation. Even Alaska is there with some fine canoes and paddles, and models of steamships.

The Philippine Islands, Uncle Sam's little brown children of the seas, have sent an interesting means of transportation, in the shape of a water caribou and cart. The ox has immense horns which spread out on each side of his head, and measure about five feet in length. They must be heavy to carry.

Contrasting with that are the great engines of our own railroads, turning majestically on the turn-tables, which illustrate how men can handle such monsters.

There are aeroplanes and automobiles of the very latest models. Here again we were reminded that the ideas shown are all new ones, and we should think that Madame World would consider that her families are very bright children.

We went up on the deck of a big liner, and were quite fascinated with the dear little rooms, with the twin beds, and pink and blue cretonne furnishings.

We wrote a letter to mother on one of the dear little desks in the room we are going abroad in some day.

Some English cars are shown, and we did not think we should care for them, as one has to be really shut up in the compartment until it gets to the next station; and if you do not happen to own it all, some one whom you do not care about may be in there, and it seemed to us that it would be unpleasant.

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