

(Letter Number One.)

No. 1206 INDIANA AVENUE, CHICAGO, MAY 26, 1893.

A windy, cold, bright afternoon, with great waves from Lake Michigan tumbling in a splendid surf with a roar like that of the Atlantic in a storm, the New Orleans passengers in the Illinois Central train, as it pulled into the Chicago station huddled forlornly like sheep in their unwise slicks and insufficient hucens, and as we crept shivering out into the station where the very crackmen were done up in top coats, we all tried to look as we liked being cold and half frozen.

I stood for a half minute, a sort of forlorn island of femininity surrounded by a sea of small hand baggage, and wondering what I should do next, but unwilling to speak, for fear some Chicago extortionist would hear me and charge me for it. At that moment a neat-looking porter in uniform stepped in front of me and serenely began loading himself up and our baggage. He very speedily was ornately decorated with baskets, satchels, a shawl strap full of railway rugs, a neat catch-all and a bundle of umbrellas. He moved off and turning his head so that one eye reached me through a chink or crevice in his coat, he said in an accent that appeared a cross between the Swedish language and the German, "What was the matter off you? Was you comin' on?" "How much?" I retorted, determined to die hard, and with vague visions of a dollar in fees distressing my mind.

He grinned all over his face, or at least over as much of it as I could see, and said intelligently: "Oh, you give just what you please."

Somehow I felt an idol, a bad, wicked idol, had been shattered. Evidently Chicago robbery did not extend so far as the railway porters.

He led us along down cemented slopes, and along stone underground tunnels, and up a narrow stairway—all unfinished—this being the Illinois Central's grand, new depot—and finally we emerged in a rarely little back street, where a lot of red-nosed hackmen were dozing on their boxes. He stung our traps into a coupe, and when I very timidly held out a feeble silver dime, he clutched it, thanked me with all his teeth, tipped his hat and left me for my first bout with a Chicago coachman during the world's fair. We were to be driven nearly half a mile, and I am proud to say I was only worsted 25 cents in the pay, he demanding a dollar, and I holding out for 75 cents. Thus a second idol was shattered, and so ended the second lesson.



STATUE OF THE REPUBLIC AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.

The mayor of New York refers to Chicago as "the most inhospitable city on earth." Don't believe it. A gentleman and refined lady met us at the fair. She had saved our dinner hot for us. She ushered us into the cheerfulness of the sleeping-rooms—of the presto change sort—where, by touching a brass rod or two, the most gorgeous of plate-glass armchairs becomes the most luxurious of white beds, and so, shut in with friends, letters, books and a bright fire in a tall stove, we forgot even the world's fair and the gawson stories of fleecing the hundreds, who are at the head of the thousand hotels prepared for the coming man. Offsetting these big hotels, where the charges really are ruinously high, are hundreds of boarding and lodging-houses, at which beds are to be had, two in a room, from \$2 a week up to \$10 a week. There are many nice houses with a 5-cent fare of the exposition at which one can get comfortable sleeping quarters and a good breakfast at from \$10 to \$14 a week. Chicago is turned into one vast lodging-house, and one bed need not be impoverished by a visit to the fair, or be at all uncomfortable or "gonged," "fleeched" and imposed upon.

Southern people coming into Chicago via the Illinois Central Road—and fancy we left New Orleans on Monday noon and Tuesday dined in Chicago—get their first view of the exposition as the train skirts the edge of the Jackson park, with Lake Michigan just beyond.

Long ago somebody heartily named the fair "The White City." He might have gone further and called it "the white city of towers."

"It was just a clock as we rolled by, and from the right-hand car windows we could see the white sun lying in long slim, silken shafts of radiance, on the forest of white towers and golden domes. At first nothing was to be seen save towers, towers, towers. Here a glittering, salt-white campanile, such as one may see hanging high in the Italian sky; here a minaret above some Moorish mosque, or a belted pagoda from far Japan, or the burnished domes of wondrous Cathay, or the gray overhanging battlements of beautiful Blarney, or the quaint peaks of a Nuremberg castle of the twelfth century, or the grand, majestic dome, like a floating globe of gold, putting like a balloon against the blue of the sky, over and above the administration building. All this and more you see as the train slips swiftly by! An alabaster white bridge across a ruffled lagoon; a milk-white colonnade with fluted columns thick as pine trees in a Caucasian forest, and above its curved roof a mighty row of statues airy poised and cleaving the sky. All this and more! A brown pool of water is close under your eye, and as the train speeds on you see an arrow-

shaped boat and a dull, dark-faced Esquimaux in seals and oiled paddle slowly around an island where lotus lilies are. All this and more! The high, woven bamboo fence of an African corral, and behind it dome-shaped huts; the steep, mildewed wall of a Bavarian castle, and on the draw-bridge across the moat lazily leaning a knight of the fourteenth century, in his green doaklet and leathern hose; or the sweet, sunny porches of a Turkish bazaar, all white and gold, and a Mussulman, sleeping on his rug in the sun.

You think with a thrill that all this is your—yours, you know, to see—to possess while memory lasts! Why, merely the eye glimpse one gets coming into the city on the train is a look into a wonder-world.

So much has been said about prices at the exposition that it is well to state in this first letter precisely what one may expect to pay without being too stung or uncomfortably economical.

All about the fair park are located hotels by the hundreds. Some of them, many of them, are flimsy board affairs, in which only a would-be suicide would risk his life. It is a foregone conclusion that hundreds of these will end in ashes or be blown away. All tower high in the air, and the best ones are made of brick and stone. The names appeal to all sorts of people, to their religions, native states, foreign ideas, literary tastes, everything; and since one or more flags float from every building it quite looks as if the angels had patriotically hung the sky with bunting. These hotels are all expensive. They put three persons in a room and charge for lodging alone \$1 to \$1.50 a day. As yet they are nearly all empty. But when the crowds begin to come with the warmer weather of June days, these will all be occupied, although, really, a lodging-house in the city is preferable. It must be borne in mind, by the way, that Jackson park is really seven miles away from the city, at the south end of town. Many of these hotels about the fair claim to be, and really are, within walking distance of the entrance gates, but after one has tramped all day long sight-seeing a street car ride of five miles is a luxury compared to a walk of a few blocks, for the Chicago block is at least twice as long as the New Orleans block.



SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS AN HOUR.

One can reach the grounds at a price ranging from 5 cents to \$2 for a round-trip on a Columbian trolley coach. Street cars and elevated roads charge a nickel, the Illinois Central trains charge 10 cents and the lake boats 25 cents for the round-trip. A cab is hired by the hour, first hour \$1.50, after that a dollar. It takes an hour, almost, to drive out. It depends on what part of the fair you wish to visit which line is best to take, for some of the entrances are four miles apart. In the grounds you can go about in a steam launch at a cost of 25 cents. A chair and a man to roll it costs 75 cents an hour, or you can hire the chair and have your own attendant, husband or friend roll it for 50 cents an hour. Light camp chairs can be rented for 10 cents a day. Free seats except on steps, boxes, lumber, etc., are very scarce and pay chairs about the free concert stands cost 5 cents. Free toilet-rooms are not easily found, and the use of the nice clean pay ones is 5 cents.

The admission fee of 50 cents is all one need pay to see all the exposition except the side shows, native theatres, circuses, panoramas, etc., that are a most wonderful feature of the mile long city of the world called the "Midway Plaisance." The prices for entrance here range from 25 cents to \$1. Nearly all, however, are 25 and 50 cents. All over the grounds are refreshment stalls, and at these the usual prices prevail. Soda, coffee, chocolate and sandwiches, etc., are 10 cents each. In the various native restaurants 50 cents is charged for an ample lunch, and a table d'hote dinner will be \$1. There are Turkish meals, Swedish meals, German dinners, clambakes, farmers' dinners, old-time home dinners, an American, Vienna lunches, every nation's food is to be tried, and the average price is only 50 cents. Thousands take their lunch with them, and eat it at a coffee stall or in a beer garden, or go to beautiful India, where scarlet-gowned men serve them free with cups of "orange pekoe." Two dollars a day should cover all the expenses of Jackson park, including admission and lunch, or dinner and a light lunch.

It is always liable to be cold in Chicago. Flannels and warm wraps must be packed in the top of the trunk, and a heavy wrap should be taken with one every day. Chicago gives promise of summer, however. Gooseberries, cherries and rhubarb brighten the fruit stalls.

Chicago is not a den of thieves, but the shopkeepers and all classes of dealers give no favors and expect none. It is a sort of spot-cash city, where money talks more winsomely than any eloquence; where you must hustle for yourself, stand up for your rights and be first, last and always strictly business. Lying on this line, nobody will impose on you; no, not even a Chicago hackman or a Chicago landlord.

Only millionaires, however, should undertake to arrive in Chicago without having apartments engaged, particularly if coming in July and August.

CATHARINE COLE.