

THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

BY EUGENE-MELCHOIR DE VOGUE.*

This year it is useless for the French people to travel abroad, since the world has come to us. The beneficent gods have reduced the size of the great globe and have rolled it along the shores of the Seine river; they have sampled the universe for our benefit. Let us take our summer outing, then, in the Paris Exposition. The notes gathered by the way I will report to the unknown friends who may wish to follow us in our rambles.

A first inspection permits us to affirm the following: The Exposition is not only a retrospective review, it is a point of departure for an infinity of new things. In this monumental chaos which has arisen in the Champ de Mars, in these edifices of iron and of decorative tile, in the machinery which obeys a new dynamic power, in these encampments of men of every race, and, above all, in the new ways of thinking which suggest new ways of living, are to be seen the lineaments of a civilization which is as yet only outlined, the promise of the world which will be to-morrow.

But we are talking at the gates and time presses. Let us enter by one of the wickets. What an elegant perspective of lawns, of water and of flowers is spread out before us between the many coloured domes of the great palace and the labyrinth of variegated pavilions. Where shall we go first? Let us follow the crowd to the great centre of attraction, the Eiffel Tower.

For some years such a construction had struggled obscurely in the brain of engineers, seeking to be born. In different places in the Old World and in the New, had men dreamed of it, and tried to design it on paper. Some had even attempted it, as at Turin, in wood, at Washington, in stone. At last the approach of the Universal Exposition hastened the unfolding of the idea. A Parisian constructor succeeded in making his projected scheme for the undertaking prevail. At first he encountered general incredulity. The word Babel sprang from all lips. But at last, in spite of derision, the Tower was decreed.

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