

ones and refer to anything of his own—and we heard hundreds of feet in length, breadth, or height; thousands of yards in area; millions of dollars in cost, repeated so often that they destroyed my companion's appetite for lunch. This reminds me that, among the statistics gathered from workmen or visitors were these. (I do not give them as authentic, for as already stated, my letters to dignitaries of the Exposition Committee were not presented). Here is some of the tall talk we heard:

"Well, sir, how much do you suppose, now, the privilege of selling pop-corn in these here grounds was sold for?" We gravely guessed \$10,000—\$25,000—\$20,000 respectively. Our informant finished eating a banana and replied: "You're a long ways out, both on ye; the right was sold for one hundred thousand dollars." Our party preserved a subdued silence, reflecting thus: If pop-corn brings \$100,000 into the World's Fair treasury, what untold sums may not be similarly realized from pea-nuts and bananas! Another piece of information—he called it a chunk—was afforded us by a visitor from Utica, N.Y., to this effect: "Well, sir, my brother—he lives right here in Chicago—told me last night, a-settin' in his door-yard on the North Side, that one of the steamboat companies has contracted to pay the World's Fair folks one million and a half of dollars for the exclusive right to carry passengers from Sheecago into these grounds by water. That's what I call a pooty big thing." We modest Canadians could not but agree with his conclusion in this respect, whatever we thought of the policy or the effect upon the visitor's pocket of what sounded like "combines" to put up prices of transportation and food. Passing his cigar-case, and lighting a fresh weed himself, the New-Yorker went on: "I want to tell ye, I'm a New York State man, and around whar I live we didn't none of us bleeve as Sheecago 'd ever git this Exposition. We reckoned we had it sure for New York. But now that I've come here, and seen what they've done a'ready an' the way they're a pushin' things along, I'll be blamed if I don't think it's a goin' to be all right. I say we'd ought to give 'em the five millions they're askin' for down to Washington. There's an almighty site o' git-up-an'-git in these western folks." We commended another shrewd, as well as patriotic remark made in excellent English by a slim young Eastern man (with a white tie) to the effect that a vastly better knowledge of the physical and commercial features of the United States must be obtained by the journey of Europeans or Orientals through the Middle States of the American Union to reach Chicago, than could be gathered by landing in New York and surveying such a National or International Exhibition in the Empire City. A German American from California, encountered on the train homeward, related his experience in the World's Fair grounds; "I took my camera with me, and had just set it up to take some views of the buildings, when an official came up and said, 'You can't take any pictures in here.' Why not? I believe this is a free country!" "Well, no, not so very free it ain't, right here. The right to take photographs has been sold to two Chicago firms, and I'll have to get you to quit on this experiment." The Californian was angry, and declared his intention of writing to the San Francisco *Chronicle* and *Examiner*, like the Englishman to his *Times*. He believed that Mr. De Young was a director of the World's Fair Board, and he fancied that influential personage would have some strong things to say about such restrictions.

But I must close. To any one who has a few days to spare, and who appreciates the marvellous and the rapid in the constructive art, I would say go and see the World's Fair buildings now—there was a strike among the iron-workers during our visit, and we could not see the great travelling crane doing its work 280 feet away up in the air—and he will not need to be advised to go and see the Fair itself. He will be drawn, as by a great magnet, to go again in 1893. To understand what the citizens of Chicago are doing in providing for the exhibits of the world I submit the following list of figures, taken from *The Illustrated World's Fair* for April:

Treasurer Seeberger's report of the moneys of the Exposition for the month of March and including April 7 made the following showing, RECEIPTS.

Balance received from temporary organization	\$ 4,257 62
Received as instalments on stock subscriptions	3,687,410 80
Amount received from City of Chicago, amount proceeds sale of bonds	4,008,726 06
Miscellaneous receipts from sundry sources	58,758 47
Received from various stock collections not yet specified	677 50
Total	\$7,792,630 45

DISBURSEMENTS.

Total disbursements on vouchers as per daily reports to auditor ..	\$4,827,609 84
Total available cash on hand	2,965,020 61
Total	\$7,792,630 45

"And shall you say nothing," asked my companion, "about the wonders of the city—the tall sky-scrappers of office buildings, the cable-cars, the Rev. Dr. Thomas at the People's Theatre, Lincoln Park, the Cyclorama of the Great Fire, the Women's Temperance Building? Nothing of the attention and hospitality we received?" Not a word, I reply, else this letter would fill two pages of the paper. Besides, any one who goes to Chicago can see these sights, and every one is sure to be hospitably entertained. But my object is to get the utilitarian visitor to see the World's Fair buildings, the greatest wonder in all that wonderful city.

Chicago, 17th May, 1892.

J. H.

ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

In view of the critical period that fire insurance companies have been passing through for some time it is very gratifying to peruse an annual statement like that just issued by the Alliance. It bears but little if any evidence of the trying ordeal that many fire underwriters had to face last year. Taking the past eighteen years the success of this company has been somewhat remarkable. It is rarely that any fire company is able to keep its average ratio within 50 per cent. for a series of years, but only on two occasions, says the *Financial Chronicle*, of London, have the losses of the Alliance exceeded that figure. As in other lines of business this company finds the ratio of expenses increasing, that for the year under review being greater than usual. The total outgo for commission and expenses, including income tax on profits, was 33.31 per cent. The profit was, consequently, not quite so large as before, the ratio being 19.84 per cent. of the premiums, against 21.26 per cent. in 1890.

The Alliance has absorbed (in 1874) the business of the Provincial, nine years afterwards the Scottish Imperial, later the Royal Farmers and Provincial Life, then the two companies

in Shropshire. And on the first of this year the Royal Canadian has been added to its list of purchases. The Canadian manager must feel no little pride in this strong and successful British company, which transacts both fire and life insurance abroad, but only fire business in Canada. Its net fire premiums have reached £400,000, and the profit of the year's work in this department is in round numbers £79,000, in addition to interest, which reaches £54,000. Out of these two sums a dividend of 18.37 per cent. absorbs £100,000, and the balance, £33,000, has been added to the fire funds. Including paid-up capital, the total funds of the company are £3,394,604.

CANADIAN BANKERS' ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Bankers' Association, representing all the banks in the country, was held in Montreal on Thursday last, when the following gentlemen were elected officers:

Hon. Presidents, Sir Donald Smith and Senator Lewin.

President, George Hague, Merchants' Bank of Canada.

Vice-Presidents, B. E. Walker, Canadian Bank of Commerce; J. Stephenson, Quebec Bank; Thomas Fyshe, Bank of Nova Scotia; and W. C. Ward, Bank of British Columbia.

Executive Council.—R. R. Grindley, Bank of British North America; F. Wolferstan Thomas, Molsens Bank; George Burns, Bank of Ottawa; George A. Schofield, Bank of New Brunswick; W. Farwell, Eastern Townships Bank; J. S. Bousquet, La Banque Du Peuple; Duncan Coulson, Bank of Toronto; E. S. Clouston, Bank of Montreal; D. R. Wilkie, Imperial Bank.

It was decided that the next meeting should be held in Toronto.

FOR SHOE AND LEATHER DEALERS.

At a meeting of tanners and curriers held in Boston last week, at which sixty leading establishments were represented, an agreement was entered into to shut down operations for sixty days. This, says the *Philadelphia Record*, follows upon similar action on the part of New York makers of sole leather. The weekly output of leather is said to be largely in excess of the present demand. Prices have gone down until there is no further profit. Stoppage seems to be the only remedy. It is estimated that 4,000 men will be temporarily thrown out of work in the New England States, and if the Pennsylvania tanners should also stop, 5,000 men would be idle in this State.

The American black leather tanners of the United States, following the example set them by the sole leather manufacturers in that country, have resolved upon closing their tanneries for a space of sixty days. Probably as a result of this step, leather is already from a cent to a cent and a half dearer.

A fair estimate of the number of steps taken daily by an average pedestrian, is put down by the *Boston Leather Reporter* at 8,000, which is only about three miles in all, of the short two-foot step, and this fact shows that the best material and work is necessary for shoes to last long.

The use of leather in decorations of fashionable houses is increasing. Dining room and library chairs are covered, and the walls of libraries and bed-rooms are case'd with it. It deadens the sounds from the outside, and besides, it is very rich looking. Inside curtains of leather, used instead of doors, have an im-