THE CENTURY:

ITS FRUITS AND ITS FESTIVAL.

BEING A HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF

THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION,

WITH A

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE OF MODERN PROGRESS.

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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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hard and unimpressible entities, the rail-
road companies, thus manifesting itself
in low rates and gratuitous advertising,
could not fail to be contagious. Nor was
the service done by the interior lines
wholly domestic. Several large foreign
contributions from the Pacific traversed
the continent. The houses and the
handicraft of the Mongol climbed the
Sierra Nevada on the magnificent high-
way his patient labor had so large a
share in constructing. Nineteen cars
were freighted with the rough and un-
promising chrysalis that developed into
the neat and elaborate cottage of Japan,
and others brought the Chinese display.
Polynesia and Australia adopted the
same route in part. The canal modestly
assisted the rail, lines of inland navi-
gation conducting to the grounds barges
of three times the tonnage of the average
sea-going craft of the Revolutionary era.
These sluggish and smooth-going ve-
hicles were employed for the carriage
of some of the large plants and trees
which enrich the horticultural depart-
ment, eight boats being required to trans-
port from New York a thousand speci-
mens of the Cuban flora sent by a sin-
gle exhibitor, M. Lachaume of Havana.
Those moisture-loving shrubs, the bril-
liant rhododendra collected by English
nurserymen from our own Alleghanies
and returned to us wonderfully improved
by civilization, might have been expect-
ed also to affect the canal, but they chose,
with British taste, the more rapid rail.
They had, in fact, no time to lose, for
their blooming season was close at hand,
and their roots must needs hasten to test
the juices of American soil. Japan's
miniature garden of miniature plants,
interesting far beyond the proportions of
its dimensions, was perforce dependent
on the same means of conveyance.
The locomotive was summoned to the
aid of foreign exhibitors on the Atlantic
as on the Pacific side, though to a less
striking extent, the largest steamships
being able to lie within three miles of
the exposition buildings. It stood ready
on the wharves of the Delaware to wel-
come these stately guests from afar, in-
different whether they came in squad-
rons or alone. It received on one day,
in this vestibule of the exposition, the
Labrador from France and the Donati
from Brazil. Dom Pedro's coffee, sugar
and tobacco and the marbles and can-
vases of the Société des Beaux-Arts
PART VIII.

IN THE MAIN BUILDING.—CONTINUED.

SILVER WRITING-DESK FURNITURE, FROM EGYPT.

It is not a particularly long trip, even by sea, from Honolulu to Manilla, and in the exposition it is very short. The Philippine Islands are housed with the rest of the Spanish dominions within the stately and somewhat sombre pavilion of imitation syenite that bears the two castles. The bark-cloth of the Sandwich Islands suggests the grass-cloth of the Philippines, but it does nothing more. In quality there is no comparison. The latter is among the most elegant fabrics in the building. Its delicacy, lightness and variety of tint place it high among the finest products of the loom. This is the forte of the Tagals, their other contributions being unimportant.

The mother-country, whom we thus
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turn to semi-tropical maize, more graceful than caladium and stately as the banana. The white bloom of buckwheat, vocal with bees, winds up his year more brightly than the aster or chrysanthemum. It may, indeed, be a floral surfeit that disinclines him to borrow from horticulture. But flowers are one of the few things in which a plethora is impossible. Properly disposed, as regards variety, mass and opposition of color, they can as little be overdone as pictures. Even weeds are but plants out of place. The India-rubber tree is inferior in beauty and fragrance to its humble relative, the asclepias or silk-pod of our fence-corners, and the burdock before it dons its burs is a charming thing to sketch. All the tenants of the parterre and conservatory are weeds somewhere.

But as we step from our shaky Al-Sirat into a paradise ahead of Mohammed's we forget to inquire whether Mr. and Mrs. Giles have come with us or not. We have left a temporary booth and its more or less perishable contents for a structure which has obviously "come to stay," its walls sheltering within of looking without the flowers of all nations on their own roots, and flourishing as though they breathed their own air. On what a scale this assemblage was made we gather from such facts as the contribution of twenty-five varieties of maples from Japan, besides a corresponding collection from the same new and distant region of camellias, conifers and other evergreens, azaleas, etc. Cuba, through the government and private exhibitors, took the foremost place in exhibits direct from the tropics. Brazil followed. More ample offerings of greenhouse trees and shrubs came from the United States Botanic Garden and Agricultural Department, and from the nurseries of England and the United States. The Washington conservatories look to the introduction of fruits and fibres that may be found available in this country, and have accordingly a more utilitarian character than those of private growers. They send the cocoa, guava, papaw, rose-apple, mango, banana of several varieties besides those which are hardy in Florida, date and other palms. The eucalyptus, or Australian blue gum, hardy in California and probably in the Atlantic States south of 35° or 36°, requires protection in this latitude. Where hardy it is said to disarm malaria, and it has been largely planted with that view in miasmatic localities in Italy, Spain, Southern France and Algeria. Some maintain that its reputation in this respect is chiefly due to its rapidity of growth. It makes in this way more striking the improvement in healthfulness consequent upon the surrounding of dwellings in malarious districts by a belt of trees.

The Robert Morris sago-palm, a century and a half old and ten feet high, would be disowned by the tropics. It is evidence that to some things a northern climate fails to impart vigor. More curious are the insectivorous plants, long known, but lately infused with new life by the magic touch of Darwin. One species is shown from Australia, another from Java and one from North Carolina. The assimilation of animal matter by plants through the roots having always been so notorious, the sensation caused by the discovery that some of them absorb it through the leaf-pores is somewhat surprising. Why should not the drosophila live on flies as well as the apple tree on Roger Williams, or the peach on André? Mr. Waterer's English rhododendrons were the lion of their short day—a day which cannot, we fear, be prolonged or repeated in the Centennial grounds. An American exhibitor, Mr. Parsons of Flushing, has for years endeavored to make this fine evergreen at home under our sky, but with only partial success. He exhibited seventy varieties. The summer seems to be a more trying period with most kinds than the winter. The common kalmias of our hills, more showy than many of the rhododendrons, are seldom seen upon the lawn by reason of their requirement of shade. Ivy also avoids the direct rays of the sun, but will grow well with a northern exposure and on the trunk of the acacia. It was exhibited in forty varieties by Hoopes & Thomas.