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Great Anglo-French Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, London

SOME INTERESTING ASPECTS.

What Fortunate Visitors from the Dominion are Seeing in London this Year.

The aim of this article explains the writer has been to reflect in some small measure the general situation of which this international celebration is a symbol. There will be found, therefore, in these pages no detailed description of this building or that, for we hope that our beautiful illustrations are sufficient in themselves. In the following columns we hope merely to point out certain features which may otherwise escape the general reader.

One fact of this kind which does not seem to be widely known is that the Exhibition is in no sense intended to be a profit-making concern. Its organisers will be quite content if expenses are paid. But if their rosier estimates are realised, and there remains a surplus at the end, they are pledged to devote this sum to some permanent public charity, or institution, destined to promote goodwill or to strengthen commercial relations between England and France.

CERTAIN UNIQUE FEATURES.

Speaking generally, one may call attention to the fact that in the erection of over twenty palaces, seven of which are 100ft. wide by 400ft. long, all the records of such buildings in this country have been broken. The Machinery Hall alone covers eight acres of floor space. There are great buildings devoted to education, the fine arts, decorative arts, applied arts, music, women's work, social economy and hygiene, apart from those containing the manufacturers' exhibits of which exhibitions are usually made. In this point also it is unique, as there has never been such a display of a public spirited character from which no possible benefit can accrue to the exhibitors. Another prominent feature is to be noted in the Colonial exhibits of these two greatest of the colonising nations. It is safe to say that no such exhibition in this country has ever had so comprehensive a display of fine arts generally. Nor need it be supposed that French artists will outshine our own, although, as a rule, we willingly concede the palm to them, but both here, and in the Palace of Decorative Arts, we shall hold our own with pictures by great British masters, and in a series of rooms fitted with interior decorations, in vogue in the various periods, extending from Queen Anne, Charles II., George III., the brothers Adam, Chippendale, and so on to the present day. In the Palace of Women's Work there will be a display particularly interesting to feminine visitors, but at this day and date the woman worker has so generally extended her sphere that the segregation of her efforts is almost impossible. In the great Palace of Music there will be, throughout the duration of the Exhibition, an unending series of fine concerts. Perhaps its most splendid feature, however, is the great Stadium, where not only an International Congress of Sports will be held, extending over four months, but where, during two weeks in July, the quadrennial Olympic games, instituted in 1896, will attract the general attention of the world of athletics and sport.

THE ARCHITECTURAL DISPLAY.

The public has come to expect that exhibitions will develop a style of architecture peculiar to themselves, will show buildings quite impossible in any other surroundings. This is true of the display at Shepherd's Bush, in fact if possible all the unique efforts of previous exhibition builders have been surpassed in the way of originality and surprising effects. If one might be permitted to make a slight criticism of the general result, it might be to express the wish that classical design had been followed in more instances, as it is peculiarly effective in the white composite material of which these buildings are made. Great columns of the Grecian schools are never

so effective as when seen in white marble or something like it. In most cases in which recognised architectural features appear they are overlaid with extraneous ornamentation to such a degree as to be almost lost.

The one example of pure style is perhaps to be found in The Court of Honour, if Indian architecture can be called pure. Here we have a glimpse of the real India

same time been able to harmonise the whole. The front represents the facade off the Hotel de Ville, and the two sides are reproductions of the famous Hotel Carnavalet and of the Arc de Nazareth. Another small building of interest is a complete Tudor House, moved bodily from Ipswich, and furnished in the style of its period. There are many who will prefer this beautiful little dwelling to

ployed, the reinforcement being indented bars a third of an inch square, spaced some 12in. apart. The roof is of corrugated sheeting, carried by trusses with a span of 81ft. 6in., with an overhang of 17ft. 10in.

BUILDING RECORDS.

Naturally, in the erection of forty acres of buildings, more or less against time, it is not surprising to hear that some interesting records have been achieved. So far as that goes, the whole of the Exhibition may be regarded as one great record-building feat. But here and there single edifices were put up by the various contractors at an almost unprecedented pace. The Administrative building, for instance, which is entirely a brick structure, was built in five weeks and three days. This is an achievement of which its builders, Messrs Staines and Sons, may well be proud. It is no mean structure, having a length of 125ft. and a width of 111ft. Its walls are 14in. thick, and 270,000 bricks were used in its construction. It was late on a Saturday afternoon when the builders approached the site. They had first some 18in. of mud to clear away, quite some difficulty was experienced in getting the foundation on account of the enormous amount of ballast which had been thrown upon the site. One side of the edifice goes down to a depth of over 5ft. For a whole day operations had to be suspended through the incessant rain. As soon as the walls rose to a sufficient height the concrete floors were put in and an army of carpenters erected the 600 yards of frieze partitions. Then came the plastering, this item alone running to £400. It is also interesting to note that no overtime for work on this edifice was paid with the exception of that entailed in erecting the scaffolding.

Another interesting building feat was the erection of the Indian edifice in the Colonial Avenue by Messrs. Humphreys. In this instance, however, it is a steel structure, filled in with concrete and then covered with plaster. It is 140ft. long and 99ft. wide. It has fourteen graceful domes and is of Indian architecture. From the moment work was commenced on the foundations until the last ladder was taken away only six weeks elapsed. Mention should also be made of the pretty French African bungalow built by M. Gillet. It stands behind the Tunis building, and is nothing less than a comfortable five-roomed, one-storey house, with a broad verandah running round it, built entirely of wood in just under three days. The floor of the dwelling stands on wooden trestles some 4ft. above the ground. It has no foundations, and has been erected by M. Gillet to show how a traveller in Africa may erect a cosy dwelling on any piece of waste land in quick time, and one which would be undisturbed by a flood, and is also dust and mosquito proof.

WHAT THE EXHIBITION HAS COST.

Various estimates have been put forward as to what the Exhibition has cost. So far as the Exhibition authorities are concerned, they have spent just over £1,000,000 on the main buildings, in laying out the grounds, erecting the lighting installation, in building roads, making paths, lawns, and flower-beds. This figure does not include the cost of the great Stadium, which was originally marked down at £50,000. As a matter of fact, it cost £85,000. To this £1,085,000 we have to add the amount spent on the Colonial buildings, which are given by the authorities as follows:—

New Zealand	£20,000
Crown Colonies	20,000
India	25,000
French Colonies	50,000
Canada	100,000
Australia	110,000
Total	£325,000

There are few of us in this Dominion, one presumes, whose business and affairs keep them tied to their desks and homes, who do not perpetually envy those more fortunate individuals, endowed with leisure and means, enabling them to pay periodical visits to the Old World. It is probable that we have never signed over our disability to travel, and see the "wonders of the world," with greater reason than in this year of grace, 1908, when the great Franco-British Fair, the result and outward manifestation of the entente cordiale, is attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors to Shepherd's Bush. Certain it is that no exhibition held in England since 1851 has approached it in importance, magnitude, or magnificence, and in point of real interest and value, it assuredly rivals anything attempted either at Paris, Chicago, or St. Louis, though these may have been of vaster proportions. And, since we cannot see for ourselves, the best next thing is to read a picturesque description from the pen of a really able writer. "The World's Work" for June devotes no less than 112 pages to the Exhibition, and from these are extracted the following descriptive study, together with a few of the beautiful pictures, with which the magazine is profusely illustrated.—Editor, "Graphic."

in everything except, alas! the clear blue sky necessary to bring out its greatest beauty. There is not merely a general copying of effect, but the smallest detail has been carried out; not only do we have the pierced balustrades, but even the close lattices, which denote the windows of the Harem in all Mohammedan countries, are found here. One might feel, particularly on a moonlight night that one had crept into an inner court of some Maharajah's palace and found the jewelled setting provided for the beauties of his retinue. The effect is greatly heightened by the sheet of glistening water which fills the central lake, and is kept in constant motion by the cascade at one end. Even the illuminations are not so foreign to the scene as one might imagine. For in these Oriental countries unacquainted with electricity, it is the custom on festival occasions thus to outline walls and buildings with thousands of fairy lamps.

As to the rest of the Exhibition the result does wear a fantastic air of frivolity quite in keeping perhaps with the butterfly existence for which it is designed. There are, it is true, some quite plain buildings, but these have very little effect upon the bright and gay appearance of the whole. Some of this character, or want of character, is due to the French element, which has, if one may say so, "let itself go" in the buildings for which it is responsible. Certainly London has never seen anything like the variety and profusion of the display. Monsieur Guirard de Montarnal is the architect-in-chief of the French section, and has among his colleagues Monsieur Roger Bauvard, who has designed among other things the Pavilion of the Paris Municipality; Monsieur Patouillard, who is responsible for the main entrance in the Uxbridge Road; Monsieur Toudoire, architect of the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean Railway, who built the great Gare de Lyon on the Quai D'Orsay in Paris; and Monsieur Le Fevre, who is in charge of the French Colonial buildings. Of the English architects perhaps Mr Imre Kiralfy and his sons have been responsible for more of the work than any recognised architect. But Mr. John Bolcher, A.R.A., has rendered valuable assistance and advice.

There are several small buildings which are perhaps more attractive to the student of architecture than the larger palaces. One of these is the Pavilion of the Paris Municipality, which is not large, but which its architect, Monsieur Bouvard, has managed to make very distinctive. He has utilised three sides of it to reproduce some famous pieces of Parisian architecture, and has at the

the curious and fantastic buildings surrounding it, some of them indeed more curious than beautiful.

MONSTER BUILDINGS.

In any consideration of the size of the structures, the Machinery Hall is easily the largest building of the kind ever erected in this country. With its annexes it covers an area of nearly eight acres. The main buildings are 661ft. long by 131ft. wide, and the connecting hall is 302ft. long by 310ft. wide. The two main halls have been built in three bays, with central spans of 50ft. and side spans 40ft. The outer columns are 28ft. high, and the inner columns 37ft. high from floor to eaves, and the columns are spaced longitudinally about 13ft. 6in. from centre to centre. The inner columns are spaced at a distance of about 26ft. 8in., the intermediate roof trusses being carried on a longitudinal girder attached to the inner column. Messrs. Alexander Findlay and Co. have manufactured the constructional work to the design of Mr. John J. Webster. The building contains a giant travelling crane, working on a central track, with the aid of which exhibits have been placed in position. Transfer facilities have been obtained by tracks and turn-tables from the West London Extension Railway, which runs directly through the connecting hall.

The Stadium is perhaps next in importance as to its size and construction. In general effect it is perhaps the greatest triumph of all the Exhibition buildings. It is oval in shape, with straight sides, the central arena being turfed, with a water-basin down one side for aquatic sports. Next to the turf, all around, is a broad cinder-track for foot-races, and outside that again a bordered track with banked ends for cycle races. The seats for spectators rise in tiers around the arena with every part visible from every seat. On two sides of the Stadium there are covered sections, open to the sky at both ends. The proportions are taken from the great Roman arena, the Circus Maximus. The running-track is one-third of a mile in length, the water-basin is over 100 yards long, while the arena inside the tracks is 235 yards long. There are seats for over 70,000 spectators, and there is said to be standing room for fully 60,000 more. The tiers of seats and standing-places are carried on steel joists 15in. deep, with 20ft. spacing, support being given by braced columns, built up of two channel bars 5in. by 2in., the columns being bolted securely to concrete foundations, and braced both longitudinally and transversely. For the platforms reinforced concrete, 2in. in thickness has been em-