

Chicago the Pagan

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A MANUSCRIPT READER'S SNEAI(
PREVIEW

It is perhaps true of any big city, but particularly true of Chicago that no

A mind guide to Chicago's soul-its hurried leisure,
t1vo people see it in the same light.

sensuous pleasures, polygenous architecture,
streets

The farmer sees it as a market for his produce, the architect as a field for
of adventure, sights of rarity, and its denizens

questing after life

his ingenuity and talent, the real estate agent as an ever-growing field for
exploita-

tion, the banker and financier as a place to make money, the young doctor as a
place to build his practice and the politician considers its possibilities for
his

o\vn particular brand of exploitation.

The artist, the thief and the bum each have still different views. One could
by Weimar Port

go on indefinitely naming the widely differing vie,vs of the many types and
classes

of people who make up this composite that is Chicago.

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If you were born in sunny California or the easygoing South, you may at
first despise Chicago's noise, bustle and dirt-the very bigness of it all, but
live in

Chicago for a year, and it "gets" you. ~The butcher, the baker, the candlestick
maker-all are agreed on this point. Yet ask any one of them just why and you
are not likely to get a definite answer. Maybe it is the many and varied oppor-

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tunities that it offers; maybe it is the people, who represent a cross-section
not

only the nation but of the entire world.

No one seems to know why, but everyone seems to love Chicago.

ivlr. Port's conception of Chicago as a woman with a pagan soul is á only
one man's idea but a rather interesting one. She bids you welcome with a come-
hitháer look and irresistible friendliness. Tho' you may hate or despise her
at

first, live in Chicago for a year and its aura will hold your heart captive.

You

can't get away from it-you won't even try. Let anyone criticize Chicago and you will resent it no matter whether or not you feel it is logical criticism.

It is a mid-western city with mid-western vigor and good nature with neither the slow motion of the south, the inhibitions of the east nor the glamour

of the far west-but definitely lovable.-.A. note \Written by l'vf,i|RION HARDING

after reading the manuscript on its way to the printer.

1953

JUDY PUBLISHING COMPANY

CHICAGO

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TO

THIS IS THE FIRST EDITION

PRICE THREE DOLLARS

JAMES J. LEY

FELLOW WANDERER IN AND ABOUT

CHICAGO MANY YEARS AGO WITH

MEMORIES OF

Purchase it at any bookstore preferably or order

Roger Sullivan campaigning for the U. S.

direct from the publisher. Printed in the United

States of America. All rights domestic and foreign Senate, Boston baked

beans and brown bread

reserved. Excerpts to a reasonable extent can at Pixley & Ehlers,

loafing in the court room

be made hut with full credit to author and publisher. while Clarence Darrow

addressed a jury, sit-

ting beside Boise Penrose on the platform as

Hughes was nominated for president

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CHAPTER 59

CHAPTER 58

BAHA'I TEMPLE

CHICAGO'S FORGOTTEN FIRE

If you are interested in any one of these subjects-architecture, Fame is fickle; and a footnote on history's page often is a matter religion, beauty, you must see one of Chicago's prime prizes for the of happenstance. Two men rode thru the nite to warn the New England eye and mind.

colonists that the British were coming, but we remember Paul Revere only. So, the 1871 fire in Chicago made world-history.

Journey north on the Outer Drive. As you leave Evanston and Three years later the Chicago fire of 1874 repeated much of 1871, come into Wilmette near the Lake, your sight is drawn with fascination tho mostly on the near southside.

to a building which I can rival the Taj Mahal in India for splendid and On July 14, 1874, a frame building near Clark and Van Buren mystic beauty.

Street (449 South Clark Street) was on fire, and about ten hours

This is the BAHA'I TEMPLE (note spelling).

later, by midnite, it had done more damage than the 1871 fire in áa similar period.

The pleasing dome is said to be the sixth largest in the world in This FORGOTTEN FIRE destroyed almost every structure from diameter.

Van Buren Street south to 12th Street (Roosevelt Road) and from

Apart from the bases of the belief of the Bahaists, this center of Clark Street east to Wabash Avenue-60 acres, 812 buildings.

sightseeing drama has its entire surface covered with symbolism in laceá .

This 812 included 709 stores, and buildings, 89 barns, 8 ,churches, like pattern. But these mystic lines are not carved in marble; the

4 hotels, 1 schoolhouse, 1 postoffice.

millions of dollars needed for marble were not necessary as a ne'v

Thirty-one four-story brick buildings were in the lot. Well, here are the balance-126 one-story, 471 two-story, 21 three-story, 1 four-process of casting concrete wáas used, a process learned of while the story-all frame or wood. Fourteen one-story, 99 two-story, 41 three-building was in construction. Terra cotta was not permanent enuf; story, 31 four-story, 5 five-story-all brick, 3 two-story stone.

concrete solved a perplexity for the builder of the structure.

This II.re, destroying almost a thousand buildings in the heart of a

But' to give the eerie lamination, sand was not in the mixing;

city wiihin ieri liours, sliould liave been, world riews; but we doubt that crushed .white quartz was used.

one out of one hundred citizens of Cliicago today even knows of the 1874 fire.

The eye no\v delites to rove baick and forth over a cream-colored,

The city was so intent upon rebuilding from the 1871 disaster and smooth-surfaced áa rea. White marble is not dense, wears away, and perhaps so fire-conscious, that the second disaster registered little. \Weather is its enemy. The Baha'i Temple has sought permanence Two unequalled fires in extent within four years gives Chicago befitting its universal creed thru the manner outlined. the title of Fire City also.

For unusual outline, for circular silhouet against the sky, for intricate ornamentation, and perh aps for an unusual religious creed- take time to see the Baha'i Temple by Wilmette Harbor, a thing of beauty, of eye rest, of mental pleasure, all in contrast to the puffing traffic which skims by its side every hour of the day and far thru the nite.

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Our thanks to the Chicago Tribune columnist (and his employers) But back to our subject, which is hidden beauty of architecture. Hundreds of residences in Chicago-or any other crowded city, if Charles Collins for permission to reprint Chicagoanian items. Clara placed on a green knoll in the countryside, would draw ahs and ohs Edmunds-Hemingway in The Line O'Type or Two writes of that un- from passersby chateaus, castles, palaces, dreams of architecture! usual, beautiful structure on Sheridan Road just north of Chicago as But most of them in the city are seldom noticed for their beauty; one drives into Wilmette, the Baha'i Temple, as impressive as a solitary pushed as they are near to some other structure, their sides and rear haystack on a well-kept la\vn, as follows, under the caption Temple utterly lost to view of the spectator, they languish in slow oblivion. by the Lake:

We are meandering greatly but at last we have arrived at 1600 north, North Avenue, misleadingly named •as are a hundred other streets Baha'i Temple, domed from gray to white, Is tipped with folded wings, all angel-wise, in Chicago. The founding fathers have á sinned greatly against us in Symbolic of the peace of prayer that lies their naming of streets. Western Avenue runs north and south. We In sanctuaries, be it day or night . . have East South Water Street, West South Water Street, etc., etc. How intricately lovely to our sight, Few things more exquisite beneath áthe skies- á North Avenue is a máa in traffic street from the lake west á to a A symphony to rest one's weary eyes score of livable, suburban towns. It was a favorite settling point Or fill a heavy heart with quick delight. around the 1890's for German-originated citizens. The Bavarian flare .. á. .

for cupolas, roof ornaments, and numerous gewgaws can be seen in
!V onagonal , its delicate design,
With infinite detail of wonder, shows the facades of the
buildings. The shapes are varied-garden vegetables
Devotion from a people at a shrine. such as beets
and broccoli, animal suggestions in lions, unicorns, goats,
. What ever one's belief, religion grows horses, etJc.,
etc.

When great harmonic beauty looms divine;
Then blessing from God's heaven overflows. In /act, á
there are many localities in Chicago where this late
nineteenth century flare for ribbons and flowers in the hair is evident.
Some of the efforts are excellent. Near our office building, in the
33rd and Michigan area, one comes upon building entrances adorned
with ~esigns, which if on some much touted European building, would
be hailed as fruits of genius. We recall two lion heads, one on each
sid~ of the entrance to a building now a dirty, foul-smelling tenement,
CHAPTER 60 which appear to us to be
excellent pieces of sculpture . .

The extreme trend today to right angles, straight:lines, flat sides,
LOST ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY
and matchbox silhouets is useful, of lower cost, but surely not of
greater -beauty. The straight line n_ever <!an hope !O be as appeffling
A sad result of close building in cities is to shadowize good as the
cittle. ••

architecture, arid all the little departures made in walls, windows, doors,
gables and roofs.

As an aside we hope that we have discerned correctly a tendency
to get away from the almost insane objective to build into crowded
areas, to erect homes and business structures tight against each other

•
or with party walls. Cities should spread out; concentration brings
high . rents, poorly lighted and ventilated quarters, crowded traffic,
delays, and above all, a new danger-that from bombings.

Cities should be suburbs completely, should be small towns
enlarged, should be areas . of green plats, wide boulevards, not too
high buildings, and above all, spaces for leisurely shopping, promenad-
ing, loafing and sightseeing.