

Letter from Helen Keller to John Hitz, August 29, 1893, with transcript

WASHINGTON, D. C. AUG 31 1898 WASHINGTON, D. C. Copy Hulton, Penn., August 29, 1893. My dear Mr. Hitz:

I wonder why I have not written to you before. Certainly you have often, very often been in my thoughts, but I have neglected to put upon paper the letter which I had in my heart for you; but to-day shall not pass until this little white-winged messenger of love has been sent by Teacher and me to gladden your kind heart. Dear Teacher has been very tired and nervous since we got back from Chicago, and her eyes have been troubling her more than ever, so that she has not been able to write to any of her friends. We have been resting quietly at Robinswood, and enjoying the beautiful country. Mrs. Hopkins spent a week with us on her way to Boston from the Exposition, and we were very happy together.

But I know you are impatient to hear about our visit to the World's Fair. We spent three delightful weeks there. Of course, it would be impossible for me to tell you, in a letter, all that we did, felt and saw while we were in Chicago. It was all so grand and wonderful. Each day was crowded with new experiences and impressions. The Fair seems a most appropriate name for the great Exposition, for surely it is the fairest thing in all the world.

We approached it the first time from the Lakeside, and got our first impressions of the White City from the peristyle. It was a glorious day; the sky and water were a perfect blue, making a most beautiful setting for the Dream City crowned by the golden dome of the Administration building. We walked slowly up the Court of Honor, pausing now and then, while my teacher described the beautiful scene to me so clearly and vividly that I do not think the picture which my imagination built could have been more vivid and real if I had seen it with my eyes. We spent the first day in studying the Fair as a whole, and in trying to understand the new world of loveliness in which we found ourselves. Late in the afternoon we stepped into a gondola, and made the trip through the lagoons. The sun was setting, and we watched the changing effects of its soft rosy light upon the towers and fair white palaces. When it was quite dark the city was illuminated, and the fire-works began. The thousands of tiny electric lights were reflected in the water—it looked as if a shower of golden fish had been caught in an invisible net. In the darkness around us we heard voices singing “My country 'Tis of thee, sweet Land of Liberty,” and from the electrical building came floating over the smooth water the evening chimes. It was all beautiful and dreamlike, and I was reminded of Venice, the beautiful, mysterious Venice which I so long to visit.

Of course, we saw innumerable wonders at the Fair, the works of man in every country, and in all times. Sometimes people express surprise that I was able to see and enjoy so much; but you see I



am like the people my dear friend Dr. Holmes tells about who have eyes in their fingers, so that they spy out every thing interesting, and get hold of it, as a magnet picks out iron filings. When I see you again I shall have a great deal more to tell you about the Fair.

Please give my love to dear Miss Barton, and read this little letter to her if you think she would like to hear it. Teacher sends you much love and many kind wishes.

Lovingly your little friend, Helen Keller.