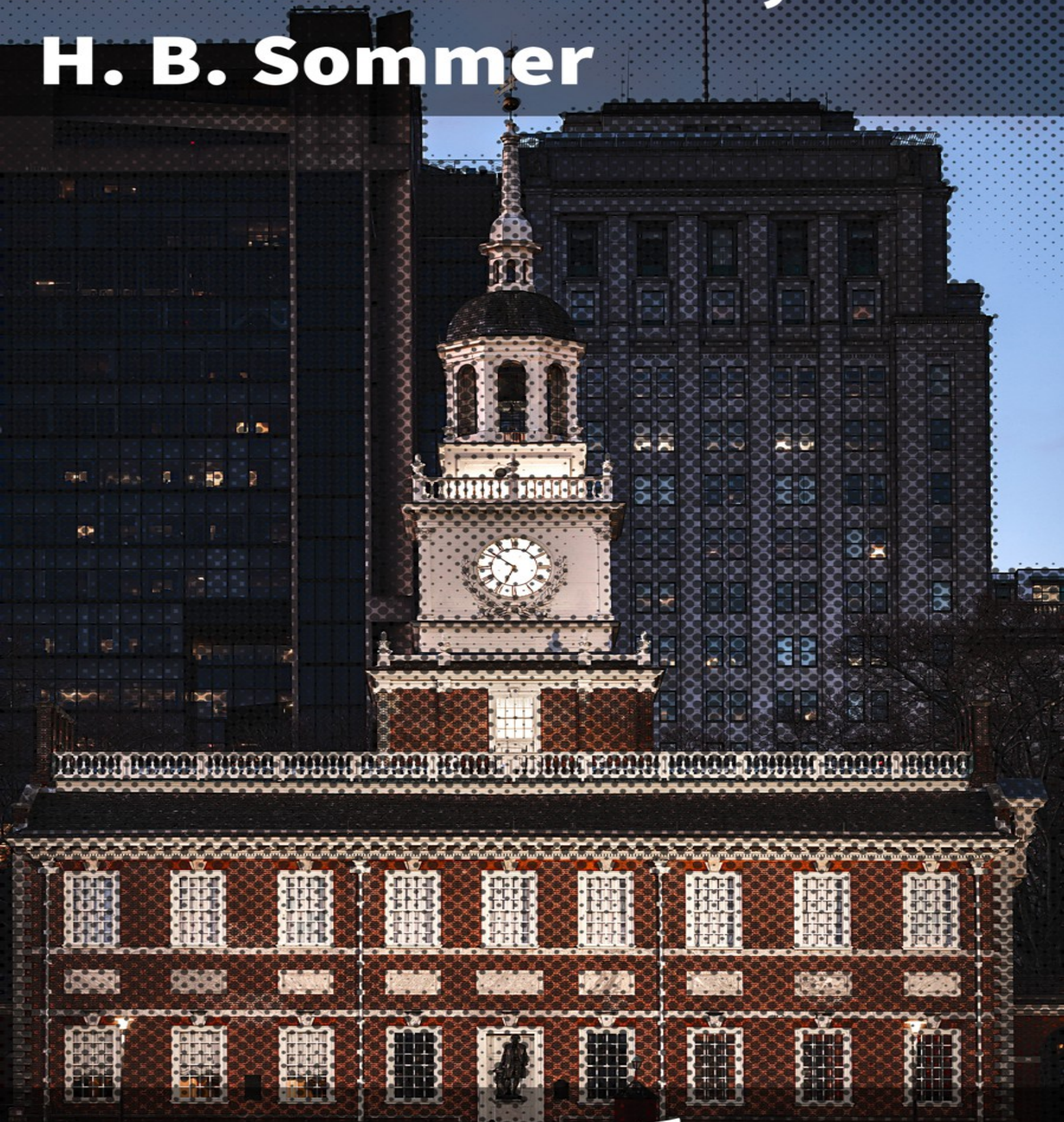


**David Solis Cohen,
H. B. Sommer**



Our Show

David Solis Cohen, H. B. Sommer

Our Show



Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4066338111388

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. "THE SPARK." ... How it all came about.

THE MAIN EXHIBITION HALL.

MEMORIAL HALL.

MACHINERY HALL

HORTICULTURAL HALL,

AGRICULTURAL HALL,

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER II. "THE FUEL." ... What the women did.

A POOR YOUNG MAN.

THE NATIONAL OR MARTHA WASHINGTON TEA PARTY.

THE INTERNATIONAL TEA PARTY.

THE PATENT LOAN OFFICE EXHIBITION

CHAPTER III. "THE COOKS." ... Who fed the flames.

GENERAL JOSEPH NAPOLEON HAWLEY,

THE HON. ORESTUS CLEVELAND,

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. GILLESPIE,

GOVERNOR BIGLER,

MR. DANIEL J. MORRELL,

THE HON. ALFRED TIMOTHY GOSHORN,

CHAPTER IV. "THE LOOKERS ON." ... Who came to be warmed.

CHAPTER V. "THE CRACKLING." ... Preparations for the blaze.

THE PROCESSION,

CHAPTER VI. "THE FIRE." ... Who flared and how they did it.

CHAPTER VII. "THE REFLECTIONS." ... Shadows, shapes, and those who made them.

CHAPTER VIII. "THE GLOW." ... Who helped and who enjoyed it.

CHAPTER IX. "THE FLICKERING." ... How it dimmed and how it brightened.

CHAPTER X. "THE SMOKE." ... How it went up.

CHAPTER I.

“THE SPARK.” ... HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT.

[Table of Contents](#)



If the late Christopher Columbus, Esq., could have foreseen, as an indirect result of his little excursion in the spring of 1492, the infliction of the following pages upon

posterity, Mr. Columbus, very likely, would have stayed at home. Think kindly, therefore, of the dead; let no blame attach to him. Perhaps a few remarks concerning the ancient mariner may prove instructive to the reader. Being both happy and able to impart useful and interesting information, we cheerfully devote a paragraph to the defunct navigator.

The capitalists of our country are familiar with Christopher, principally through a cut of that nautical gentleman which an artistic government has placed upon the reverse side of its five-dollar bills. The elevated cross in the hands of the piratical-looking monk kneeling beside him, has given rise to a wide-spread belief that Mr. Columbus was a bishop or a cardinal. It is our duty to dispel this grievous misconception. He was simply a Brazilian sea captain, who believed there were two sides to every question, even to such a serious question as the world. Having taught Queen Isabella of Spain, who had not then abdicated, how to make an egg stand and drink an egg-flip, she gave him, under the influence of the latter, command of the steamer "Mayflower," with permission to row out and see what he could find. He landed at Plymouth Rock; discovered the city of Boston, first, by special request, being presented with the freedom of THE COMMON by the grateful inhabitants, and welcomed in a neat speech by Mrs. Harriet Byron Stowe.

Shortly after this, George III. of England commanded that all the male children born in the Colonies should be cast into the Atlantic ocean. He also advanced the price of postage stamps. These injustices were more than the people could stand; they met in Concord, and drove the British out of

Lexington. This alarmed George, who immediately passed the famous “stamp act,” and telegraphed to Benjamin Franklin, then postmaster at Philadelphia, authorizing him to distribute free rations of postage stamps three times a day. But the wires clicked back the touching refrain—

“Too late! Too late! Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these ‘too late.’

Yours, BEN.”

Benjamin then convened a job lot of patriots at Philadelphia, and they resolved that these United States were, and of right ought to be, free and easy. Commodore John Hancock, of the Schuylkill Navy, was chairman of the convention. On motion of Robert Morrissey (whose nephew John, late M. C. from New York, inherits his uncle’s statesmanlike and financial abilities), a bell to proclaim liberty was purchased for the State-House steeple. They practised economy in those brave days, and bought a cracked one, because they got it at half price. It is still in Independence Hall, a monument of our veracity.

The world knows well what followed, and ’tis well for the world that it does. General Cornwallis finally surrendered to General Scott at the Germantown Intersection. The “Junction” depot now marks the spot. So, dismissing our historical reminiscences, we would respectfully request both the gentle and the savage reader, to imagine, after the manner of the modern drama, the lapse of one hundred years, ere we proceed with the second act.

This century being buried in that popular mausoleum, the vast ocean of eternity, a universally expressed desire to celebrate the nation’s centennial birthday in a style befitting

its present power and importance, gradually assumed the form of an International Exposition, to be held during six months of the year 1876. Philadelphia was selected as the site, partly on account of historical associations and the proprietorship of the cracked bell, but principally to gratify the inhabitants of the adjoining Dutch settlement, New York.

Congress was naturally appealed to for countenance and assistance. Unfortunately, however, Congress, having bestowed all its material aid upon railroad and steamship subsidies, had nothing but its moral support to offer. Having a large stock of this commodity, it was tendered with the usual modesty and circumspection which *CONGRESSIONAL* marks the action of that body in national affairs. The President was authorized to *MODESTY* invite the world to the Exposition—without expense to Congress. Philadelphia was granted permission to hold the Exposition—without expense to Congress; each State was allowed the privilege of appointing a commission—without expense to Congress; and, to be brief, the economic representatives of the people resolved that these United States might go in and have a good time generally—without expense to Congress.

Jubilant with this encouragement, the State Commissioners organized an Executive Committee, which appointed a Board of Finance, and auxiliary committees upon everything and anything, including mining, manufactures, calisthenics, art, science, primogeniture, horticulture, pisciculture, agriculture, infanticulture, and hydrostatics. City committees were constituted. These were jobbed out to wards, and again sublet to precincts, through

which domestic juntas were established in every household. Thus the voice of the people woke the echoes of the capitol, and reverberated to the furthestmost corners of the universe.

The Building Committee immediately contracted with Mr. Richard J. Dobbins (the inventor of *GEE UP* Dobbins' electric soap) for the construction *DOBBINS!* of

THE MAIN EXHIBITION HALL.

[Table of Contents](#)

He agreed to furnish the very first quality of soapstone for the masonry, and to use Castile only, for the girders. The following were the chief points of the contract:—

1st. The building to form a parallelopipedon, in order to secure the choicest location to each exhibitor.

2d. To be thoroughly waterproof. Dr. McFadden of the *Aqua Fontana* department, and several other eminent surgeons, to fill it up to the ceiling as a test previous to the opening. The contractors to take it back if the test proved unsatisfactory.

3d. The walls to be of gutta percha; to be distributed after the closing of the exhibition to the pupils of the public schools for chewing and erasing purposes.

4th. A transcript to meander through the centre of the building, with a knave to right and left. Cucumber pumps of the *Louis Quatorze* pattern on the east and west detours, alternating with eight green cellar doors, to give the same effect and finish which marked the *tout ensemble* of the Vienna buildings. A main curricule on the right to be flanked

by iron decades, with arched approaches for bipeds, tripods, and quadrilaterals.

5th. The general appearance of the exterior to favor the Polynesian style, which is replete with architectural beauties. *Fac similes* of the Tower of Babel, Tower of London, Leaning Tower of Pisa, and Tower Hall, to adorn the four corners. The trusses and bandages supporting the roof, to be of purple and fine linen, with brass mountings. The roof itself to be perpetually covered with wet towels, to guard against sunstroke.

6th. The centre aisle to be covered with canton flannel matting, with the grass sloping up to the back door. Nineteen hotel candles to illuminate the ground floor, with a citrate of magnesia light in the attic window.

This extraordinary structure was completed according to agreement, and upon being weighed at the corner grocery, kicked the beam at 1234567890 pounds, 19 shillings and sixpence.

Mr. Dobbins was also entrusted with the erection of

MEMORIAL HALL.

[Table of Contents](#)

This is a permanent building, so adapted that it may be used hereafter as an Art Gallery or a Station-house. The foundation is not only cemented with Spalding's glue, but the iron posterns run through to China, and are tied on the other side with the back hair of coolies, detailed for the service through the courtesy of the Peking government.

Notwithstanding Mr. Dobbins' immense labors in completing these two buildings, he still found time to run

over to Rome and purchase the *MORITURI* Colosseum. He brought it home with him *SALUTAMUS*. for the purpose of exhibiting Prince Bismarck and the Pope in gladiatorial contests during the exhibition months.



The contract for

MACHINERY HALL

[Table of Contents](#)

was awarded to Mr. Philip Quigley, of Wilmington, Delaware. When it grew too big for his State, he removed it to and finished it upon the ground it occupied. The machinery exhibited was worked by forty horse-power, and a neat stable was attached to the rear for the care and accommodation of the forty horses, the contribution of the city passenger railway companies.

All the shaftings were of sandal wood, and the belting of Russia leather, supplied by the family of the Czar himself. An "hydraulic annex" was also tacked on to the building. It contained a tank 60 by 180 feet, with 10 feet depth of water for fishing and bathing purposes. A portion was fenced off for the preservation and display of "The Falls," which the hotel keepers and hackmen of Niagara kindly loaned for the occasion. The hydraulic rams and other live stock were watered here every morning, and at stated intervals during the day hydrodynamic and hydrostatic performances were given in the tank by the pupils of the "Girls' Normal School." The former were very unique.

The consideration for the construction of this building, as per Commissioners' report, was \$542,300, including drainage, water-pipe, plumbing, and silver-plated door knobs, but exclusive of interior white-washing. This, however, was performed gratuitously by Professor Johnson of the African Commission.

Mr. John Rice, a healthful and nutritious builder, was selected to erect the beautiful

HORTICULTURAL HALL,

[Table of Contents](#)

which remains a permanent ornament to our park, and an attractive target for the shots of the young idea visiting the locality. The immense expanse of glass will doubtless provide innocent amusement to many generations of young America. May they ever appreciate the kind consideration which placed the building convenient to a line of soft rocks, supplying ready-made boulders of all sizes. We believe,

however, that the building is taken in at nights; we know its visitors are taken in during the day. Some idea of its vastness may be given by stating that more than 7000 acres of land are situated around it.

AGRICULTURAL HALL,

[Table of Contents](#)

being of *papier maché*, inlaid with mother-in-law of pearl, was cut out by steam, and work was not commenced upon it until September, 1875. The pens for live stock adjoining the building were of steel (a favorite material in public edifices), and were a part of the contract. They were fashioned after the manner of the famous floating palace, "Adelaide Neilson," of the Noah family. The plans were furnished by the Shemitic commission from rough drafts now in possession of the descendants of Admiral Noah.

At a late date the

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

[Table of Contents](#)

decided to erect a few buildings, including a hospital. They thought the latter might come handy in Washington after the exhibition, for resigning officials. When we first learned that the United States had obtained 100,000 feet for their buildings, we thought it another display of persevering frugality. We imagined they desired to save a hardware bill by using the nails accompanying the material. We discovered that the feet merely meant the ground for the buildings to stand on.

As the Grecian government had expressed itself too poor to take part in the Exposition, Mr. Windrim, the architect, was instructed to design these buildings in the shape of a Greek cross. Through this delicate *A COMPLIMENT TO SAPPHO.* compliment, the land where Sappho lived and sung, was represented after all.

These, with the offices for managers, gas men, stage carpenters, etc. etc., and some national, state, and special buildings, which may claim our attention further on, complete the list of structures erected upon the Centennial grounds for exhibition purposes. Men of all nationalities vied for the privilege of taking part in the glorious work. The Teuton and Celt underbid the native American; the co-patriots of Garibaldi did still better, only to be put to shame in their turn by a Chinese colony. Ignoring all natural partiality and national prejudice, the contractors, in a spirit of true republicanism, gave the most work to those who labored for the least money.



CHAPTER II.

“THE FUEL.”... WHAT THE WOMEN DID.

Table of Contents

Nature always provides for emergencies. The world required steamboats and locomotives, and, lo! a Fulton and a Stephenson appeared to supply the demand. We craved a means of rapid intercommunication, and Mr. Morse sat down and invented his telegraph. We experienced a soaring desire to sail through the air, and George Francis Train stepped forward to inflate our balloons. So, when a lady competent to organize and superintend the workings of her sisters, became requisite to the success of the Centennial project, nature did not desert us. Uprose, as the poet sweetly remarks,

“A perfect woman, nobly planned
To boss an army or a peanut stand,”

*LOVELY
WOMAN.*

and grasping the banner, Mrs. Emma D.E.N. Gillespie became the special partner of the Board of Finance.

Were we about writing a work in twenty quarto volumes, the kind we have been in the habit of producing, we might faintly hope to do justice to the prodigies accomplished by the noble women of America, and especially by our own Philadelphia ladies. What we do write, however, is the result of personal observation. Blessed with female relatives *in esse* and *in posse*, who have been active members of ward committees since the first trumpet tone, we write advisedly; having been snubbed, sacrificed, and made secondary to

centennial enthusiasm for three long years, we write with a proper appreciation of the solemn duty in hand.

The dear creatures travelled up to the State-House steeple; they glanced around upon the situation; they rolled up their sleeves, metaphorically, and swooped down upon the city. They canvassed stores and factories from turret to foundation stone; they invaded dingy counting-houses, and sauntered like sunbeams into dusty offices, collecting subscriptions to centennial stock, peddling centennial medals, and doing irreparable damage to the peace of simpering clerks, blushing salesmen, and susceptible employers. A single case will serve for illustration. Listen to the story of

A POOR YOUNG MAN.

[Table of Contents](#)



He was an innocent youth, undergoing *“NOT WISELY*
initiation into the mysteries of *BUT TOO*

compounding and weighing out sugars, *WELL.*"
teas, and spices at a West-End grocery. A
Spruce Street damsel did the cruel deed. She visited the
establishment several times in reference to some shares of
stock, and her passing glance sank into his soul. His deep,
poetic nature demanded an outlet for the sacred fire. *Ætna*
will burst; *Vesuvius* will explode. *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* were
but parlor matches compared to him.

The evening succeeding the lady's third visit to the
grocery, a package, neatly done up in brown paper, was left
at her residence by a youth who vanished upon the instant.
The lady untied the bundle, and discovered an A. No. 1
salted codfish. The following lines, on pink initial note
(slightly greased), were fastened to its tail by a blue ribbon:

—

"My love is boundless as the ocean,
Deep as its waters my devotion.

This cod, sweet maid, is salt—
Salt is the ocean too;
By logical analogy, therefore, this fish will prove
Type of my love for you."

Next evening, about the same time, another package
arrived, with another poetic sentiment in the same
handwriting:—

"I send a can of salmon soused,
'Tis sweetness in the sour;
O, would your smile the salmon was,
In my forlorn soused hour!"