

# "SEE EUROPE IF YOU WILL, But SEE AMERICA FIRST"

By FISHER S. HARRIS.



Black Rock  
in the Great  
Salt Lake,  
Utah

The Movement Inaugurated by the Salt Lake Commercial Club, which has already assumed semi-national importance.

THE widespread interest excited by the announcement that the Salt Lake Commercial club had inaugurated a movement looking to a combination of Transmississippi interests, having for its ultimate object the diversion into western ways of a portion of the great sum of money expended in foreign countries by American sight-seers, indicates that the thought was at least timely. Indeed it may safely be said that the idea which found expression in the club's action, existed in the mind of every patriotic American who, being acquainted with the marvelous scenic beauties, superb climatic conditions and unsurpassed industrial opportunities of his own country, observed with a feeling closely akin to disgust, the growing intensity of the European vacation fad.

#### Scenery as an Asset.

Aside, however, from the sentiment of patriotism herein suggested there is involved also the large question of self interest. Attractive scenery, as I shall endeavor to prove later on, is the most valuable asset a community can have, surpassing in continuous and permanent returns the product of fields and mines. Assuming for the present purposes of this article, that this statement is true, it follows that western railroads, commercial organizations and state governments are and should be directly interested in any movement having for its object the exploitation of that asset in which the west is so surpassingly rich.

There is, however, a yet broader point of view from which to consider this question. No great permanent good can come to the west that does not benefit all the nation, and, therefore, the effort to induce Americans to see their own country first, whatever they may do afterwards, is entitled to the support of all America.

#### Cost of "Doing" Europe.

Eastern money entering into western development returns again to the Atlantic seaboard, and helps to swell the bank clearances of eastern money centers, while American money spent in Europe is gone forever from the nation's wealth. The serious importance of this continual diversion of home money into foreign channels is best appreciated when its amount is considered. For instance, during 1904 the sum of \$150,000,000, was expended by American sight-seers in "doing" the old world, and while there, they spent \$40,000,000 more in the purchase of articles on which, according to the U. S. treasury department, they paid duty at the New York Custom house. All of which means that in the year named, one hundred and ninety millions of American dollars were scattered over foreign lands—a Titanic shower of gold, which went to the enrichment of foreign landlords and curiosity dealers.

Could this princely fortune be kept in America for 10 years it would amount to a sum sufficient to more than pay our national debt twice over and make the United States easily the richest nation under the sun. It would build a sea level canal at Panama and leave one billion five hundred million dollars in the treasury. It would build an imperial highway from New York to San Francisco and another from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

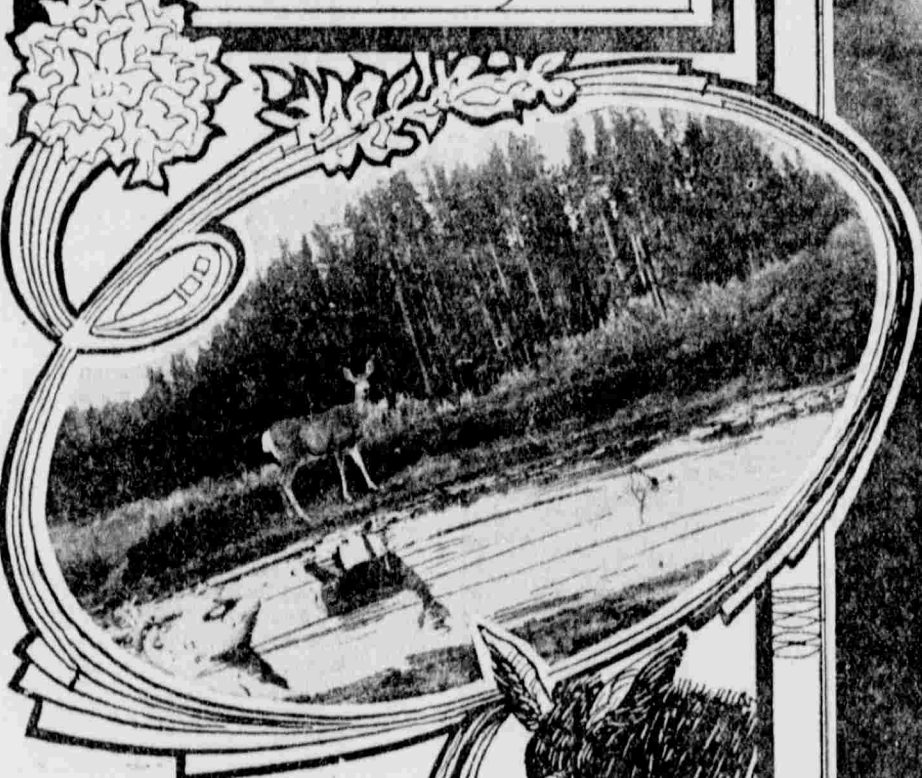
#### The "Golden West."

I think it will be readily admitted that any material part of the sum in question diverted into Transmississippi commerce and development would not only redound to the financial welfare of that important section of the nation, but would make better Americans of the spenders. For no citizen of the United States can look once and superficially upon the stupendous beauty of the "Golden West" and breathe its health-laden air without feeling an increase of patriotic pride in the manifold excellencies of his native land. It would seem then that not only self-interest but patriotism should impel our eastern fellow citizens to give the west a "square deal."

No sane man who has given thought to the subject here discussed imagines for an instant that people can or should be prevented from indulgence in the luxury of foreign travel. The timeworn paths of the old world will always be thronged with eager travelers from the newer lands, and it is to be hoped that the storied cities of the fatherland will never lose the affectionate interest of those who have, here in the western



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hemisphere, builded homes and acquired a new political allegiance. Nor should we forget the great incentive to foreign travel found in the art galleries, historical associations and musical conservatories, with which Europe abounds. But to those who love and are continually seeking the beautiful in nature the splendid west offers a veritable treasure trove of varied and never ending loveliness.

The idea behind the commercial plan is to let these good people know what we have here, and to do it in such a way that there will be taken from them forever the excuse of ignorance.

If one should ask the name of the most popular president the United States has ever had, the answer would likely be, "Roosevelt." If one should ask the principal cause of his popularity the answer would doubtless vary, but I am of the opinion that Mr. Roosevelt enjoys the distinction as much because of his intimate acquaintance with all parts of the country as for all other reasons combined.

#### American Attractions Greatest.

In the preceding portion of this article, self-interest and patriotism have been suggested as reasons justifying American in place of European travel. There is yet another reason of moving force in this connection. I refer now to the pleasure to be derived from a journey through the innumerable western wonders that are not only worth while but easily and comfortably accessible. There is nothing of scenic interest in the old world that is not surpassed in beauty and impressiveness by hundreds of scenes of natural and superlative loveliness in this western land of ours.

Permit me to padrone briefly a few of the things with which the west can make good its claim to attractions superior in kind and character to those of any other country in all the wide, wide world.

#### Look on This Picture.

Let me in fancy take the old world tourist to Pasadena and direct his gaze

over the Arroyo Seco to the orange and olive lands stretched away into the dim distances of the horizon and back to the imposing heights of Mt. Lowe standing guardian over that godly land where it is "always summertime." Let me take him wandering and wondering through the Yosemite with its multitude of the marvels of nature in her most playful mood. Let me go with him to the Columbia river and "where rolls the Oregon." Let him stand in

the shadow of the high hills about Shoshone Falls and listen to the unceasing thunder of the flashing, falling waters. Let him look over the vast, desolate expanse of the Great Salt Lake, that deep blue sea on the crest of this continent, the weird beauty of which has been said and sung in every land and language under the sun. Let him see the Yellowstone National park, whose varied charms and geological curiosities are at once the delight and

despair of him who would attempt to describe them. Then go with him to the Grand canyon of the Colorado and let him look at that vast crevasse in the earth's surface, whose impressive grandeur no painter has fittingly painted, and the adequate description of which beggars all languages. Then go with him into "the sad southwest, the mythical sunland," where are the ruins and remains of a race that sowed and reaped, lived and loved, long before the Jews made bricks without straw in the land of Pharaohs.

But the Christmas News of magnificent proportions though it is, has not the space, nor I either the time or ability to make a categorical enumeration of the thousands of places in the west where one may revel in the lavish loveliness of nature.

But one who comes forth from such an experience as I have so imperfectly described, must needs be a better American and a better man.

#### Of Incalculable Value.

The statement has been made herein that the scenery of the west is of greater value in dollars and cents than all the farms and mines in the trans-Mississippi country. To one who has given no thought to the subject here suggested, the assertion sounds absurd, yet investigation proves that it is nearly, if not quite, true, and that, without taking into consideration the soul uplifting force and pleasure-giving power of the manifold beauties of nature.

Scenery considered as an asset sounds odd to the average man and his mind involuntarily revolts at the idea. Nevertheless, the scenery is an asset and in many instances the most valuable one, from a purely monetary standpoint, that any community can possess.

In proportion as the population of the world increases and the faded, overworked men and women of the crowded cities, hearken to the "Call of the Wild," the money value of scenery will increase.

When Products Are No More.  
The output of the mines, the increase

#### Twenty States in Salt Lake Conference.

ALREADY the success of the initial movement of this great campaign is assured beyond question. On January 25 next in Salt Lake there will assemble a conference of the utmost importance to western America. It is practically certain that not less than 250 representatives of the Transmississippi States, Hawaii, Mexico and British Columbia will be present. The meeting was to have been held one week earlier, but was postponed at the urgent request of California, Oregon and Hawaii, who preferred the date later decided upon. The basis of representation is as follows: Governors of states and territories and mayors of cities of the first class, will be ex-officio members of the conference. Each state or territory will be entitled to two delegates at large to be appointed by the governor; commercial clubs, boards of trade, chambers of commerce, merchants and manufacturers' associations, steamship lines, railway and transportation companies, one each. Twenty states and two territories west of the Mississippi, and Hawaii and the Republic of Mexico and British Columbia will participate in the conference. The responses that are coming to the committee are of the most encouraging character, and every one interested is filled with enthusiasm and confidence as to the outcome of this great and splendid undertaking.

where, come people seeking rest, recreation and such enjoyment as comes from the contemplation of new scenes, charming landscapes and smiling skies. Consider the constant beggar from America to the old world and the millions of money flowing from American homes into the channels of European trade and industry, bringing prosperity to foreign communities, which were it not for their scenic environment, would exist in poverty and obscurity, unknown and unvisited.

It would take a Napoleon of finance to accurately compute the cash value of the Jungfrau, the Riviera and the Matterhorn to the Swiss republic; the Fjords to Norway and Sweden, the Tyrol Alps to Austria-Hungary, the Trossachs to Scotland, the Killarney and Tipperary lakes to Ireland, the Rhine and Danube rivers to Germany, the volcano of Vesuvius to Italy, and so on, ad infinitum.

#### Foreigners Understand.

The peoples of these countries not only comprehend the commercial value of the scenery the gods have provided for their profit, but they make the most of it, and no expense is considered too great that will result in making the way easy and the path straight for the incoming of the visitor. A convincing illustration of this fact is found in the expenditure by the Swiss and Italian governments of \$15,000,000, in boring the great Simplon tunnel, which has been not unaptly called "The Tourist Way." The Prince of Monaco has expended a king's ransom in beautifying his domains in order that those who lose their fortunes playing rouge et noir at Monte Carlo may afterwards commit suicide surrounded with the loveliness of nature accentuated by the arts of the landscape gardener.

#### What it Would Mean.

I will not further multiply instances beyond saying that many European governments other than those named

above, have dignified the scenic assets of their countries by lending their official and personal aid and encouragement to any movement having as its object their further improvement. I think it may safely be said that if American sight-seers should remain away from continental Europe for two seasons, hard times would reign from the North Cape to the Bosphorus. But the thrifty foreigner, who from experience knows the monetary value of the natural surroundings, amid which the accident of birth has placed him, knows too, that while the average Yankee is greatly careless of his spending money, he insists upon being comfortable, and wants something like value received for the gold he gives up. As a consequence he finds pleasant houses of entertainment with service, and at the end pays an unrighteous overcharge with a smiling face and gives the glad hand to the obsequious landlord.

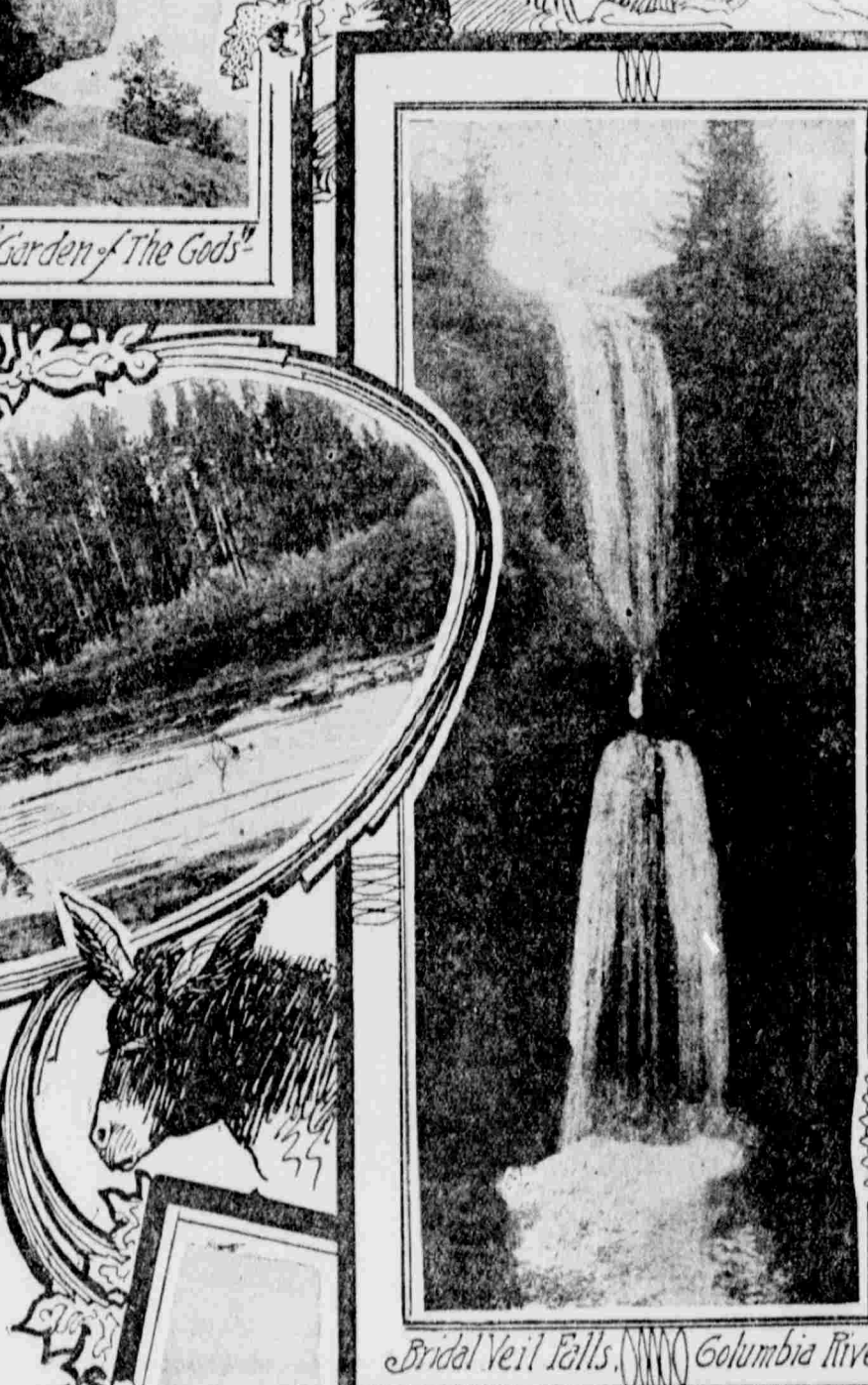
#### What West Can Offer.

In our own country perhaps the most striking example of the money value of scenery to a community is presented by the state of New Hampshire, which has received from outside sources, because of its scenery alone, the sum of \$30,000,000 in the last decade. Southern California, that delectable land, owes most of its present prosperity to the numerous strangers who continually throng its gates. But here enters, as in Colorado and Utah, the element of climate, which also has an important commercial value when considered alone or in connection with scenery.

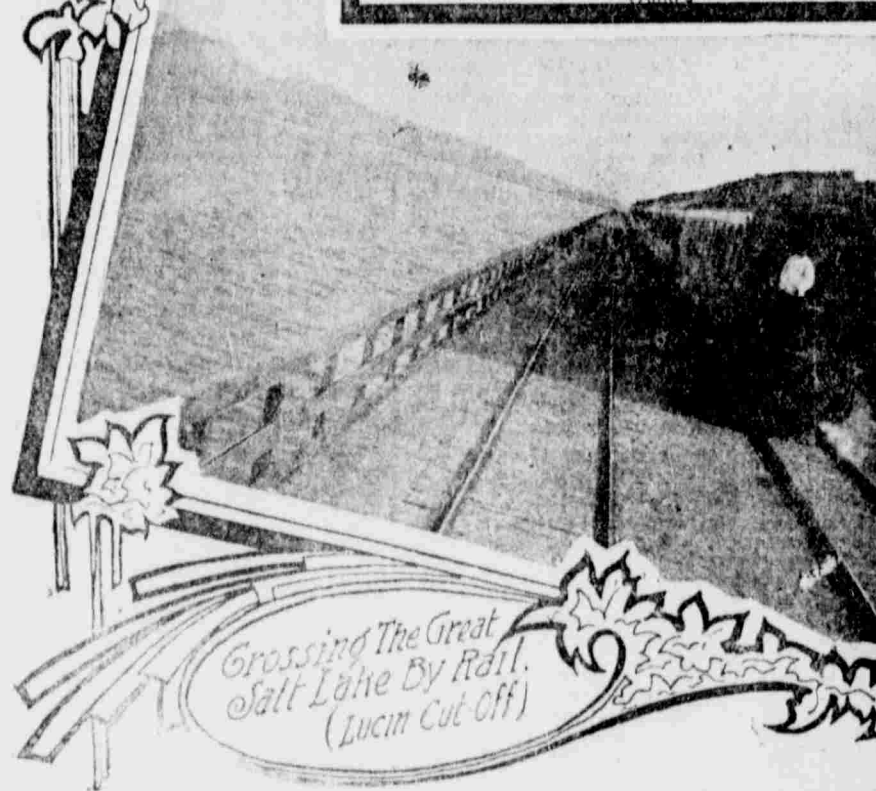
I trust that enough has been said to demonstrate conclusively, not only the wisdom, but the eminent advisability of a carefully considered combination of Transmississippi business interests, having for its object the creation of public sentiment in favor of the practical application of the thought contained in the sentence "See Europe if you will, but see America first."

How best to do this is the problem which will confront the conference called for January 25, 1906. In order to facilitate the work of the conference the Salt Lake Commercial club will have ready for consideration a comprehensive plan of procedure for the future, which will be genuinely representative of the great area of country interested.

If this important semi-national movement shall prove even partially successful, the result will not only be beneficial from a material standpoint but the consequent closer acquaintance of Americans with America will tend towards a better and broader comprehension of the magnitude of the great republic.



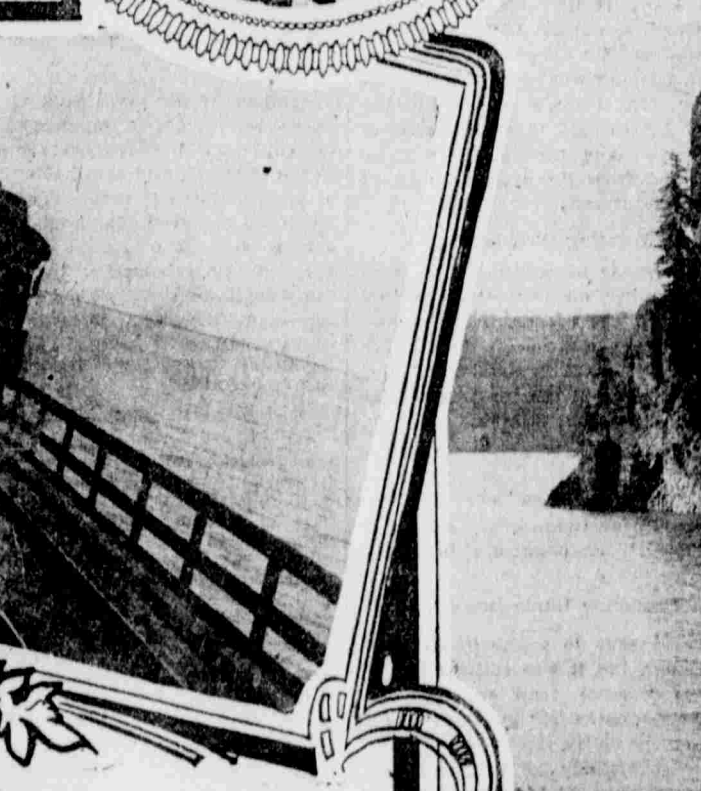
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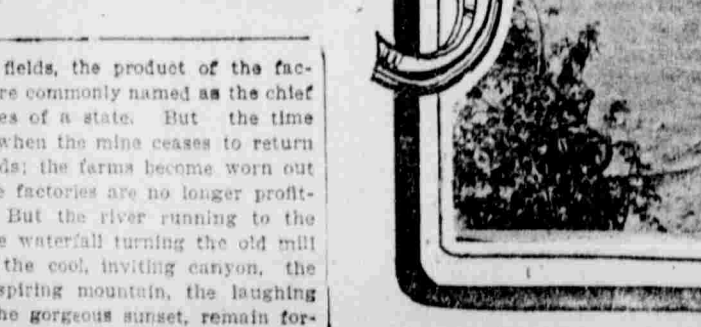
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