

**A PRESENTATION OF CAUSES
TENDING TO FIX THE POSITION
OF THE FUTURE GREAT CITY OF
THE WORLD IN THE CENTRAL
PLAIN OF NORTH AMERICA**

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A presentation of causes tending to fix the position of the future great city of the world in the central plain of North America by J. W. Scott

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J. W. SCOTT

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Pam,

A PRESENTATION OF CAUSES

TENDING TO FIX THE POSITION OF THE

FUTURE GREAT CITY
OF THE WORLD

IN THE

CENTRAL PLAIN OF NORTH AMERICA:

SHOWING THAT

THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD'S COMMERCE,

NOW REPRESENTED BY THE

CITY OF LONDON,

IS MOVING WESTWARD TO THE

CITY OF NEW YORK,

AND THENCE, WITHIN ONE HUNDRED YEARS, TO

THE BEST POSITION ON THE GREAT LAKES.



BY J. W. SCOTT.



SECOND EDITION (REVISED.)
1870

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

WRITE a long introduction to a second edition of this pamphlet was written a short time before the author's death, in December 1878, when he was revising it for publication. The original manuscript, however, embraced so much matter that was contained in the pamphlet itself, that the editor has thought it advisable to retain only so much of it as seemed due in justice to the author's sentiment of pride in his theory: a theory which he was, I believe, the first to broach, and, throughout a long life, to maintain with an ability which has always been recognized, and a faith in it that nothing could waver. Though his conclusions were at first deemed too wild to be sound, and were laughed at by those who failed to follow his reasoning, they were usually regarded as pretty well demonstrated by those who did follow it. Now, these theories of city growth have become staple thought among intelligent men, so that few persons of the present day know how original and striking they were when projected in Mr. Scott's writings more than forty years ago. Then, barely to suggest that any interior city might some day become a metropolis, rivaling New York, was thought too absurd a stretch of imagination to be entitled to respect. The final conclusions reached by Mr. Scott, in this pamphlet, as the result of his study of causes and effects which will fix the location of the future *greatest* city, may seem in their special application quite as bold to-day as his general theory concerning the power of *interior trade* did forty years ago. Time alone can prove whether his last deductions are less strongly based than the preliminary demonstrations.

In this edition of the pamphlet some matter has been omitted which seemed not essential to the thread of the argument, or likely to embarrass the ordinary reader by too much detail of statistical illustration. I have also added some expressions, as well as some pages of my own, in the body of the pamphlet, on the subject of cheap fuel as one of the primary productions necessary to attract a dense population. This branch of the argument was not overlooked by my father, but, through some unaccountable oversight, was not embraced in his argument as published in the first edition of the pamphlet. I have taken the liberty to interject it, knowing that it would meet the author's approbation were he living.

Toledo, January 15, 1876.

F. J. S.

(now 1905) ab
70 years ago
1835

THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE
SECOND EDITION.

The second edition of this pamphlet is intended to be the last of a long series of papers from my pen, designed to call attention to the great future development of the interior trade of our country, and especially to its effect to produce great cities.

As long ago as 1828, pondering on the geographical claims of the interior of our Continent to draw to it a great population, I reached the conclusion that in it would grow up one or more of our largest cities, exceeding all except New York. In 1832, in a small monthly published by me in Norwalk, Ohio, I first made public this opinion with facts and reasons in its support. In 1838, and afterwards, I published several papers on the subject of Internal Trade, and its effect in the development of cities, in the *Hesperian*, a monthly, published by Wm. D. Gallagher and Otway Curry, first in Columbus, O., and afterwards in Cincinnati. The same subject was afterwards more fully treated by me in *Hunt's Merchants Magazine*, of New York, through several volumes, but chiefly in volumes eight and nine. Later, several articles on the subject were furnished to *De Bow's Review*. These articles opened up views at first altogether new, and their novelty excited both ridicule and discussion.

In this pamphlet the author hopes to give the reader clear views of what he believes to be the true theory of the growth of cities. His final conclusions he expects to be received with incredulity or doubt. Of their general soundness, however, he hopes sufficient facts and reasons are furnished to bring conviction to careful and unbiassed readers.

THE GROWTH OF CITIES.

CITIES are organisms that grow up as naturally as men. They develop where human faculties are most effective, and because these faculties can be more effective there than elsewhere. Like men, too, they are mutually helpful. London could not have grown to be what she is without the aid of Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and other great cities in her neighborhood and in other parts of the world. Proximity to these has given her, and sustained in her, more than one of the millions of her people. On the other hand, London has not failed to return to her sister cities the full measure of benefits received from them. As all the principal cities of the world contribute to the support of London, so they all take tribute of her. Honest commerce gives forth equal benefits, and no commerce that is not honest can be permanently successful.

The earliest great cities were built by a race of men inferior to our own, to-wit: the Mongolian Chinese. Their means for commercial operations—navigable rivers and canals—though imperfect, enabled them to centralize commerce so as to build up cities containing a million or more of people; but, with insufficient unity of government and interest to draw commerce to one great centre. Subsequently, Caucasian and mixed races centralized the commerce of their several national dominions, on the Tigris, Euphrates, Nile, Ganges, and other navigable rivers. These were commercial centres, chiefly for the nations which made them their capitals for, at that period, very little commerce between nations existed. The early cities of the Mediterranean sea were the first that were made centres of any considerable international

commerce; and this was chiefly confined to the waters of that sea. In short, trade, in early times, was confined to very limited regions. It was local and isolated. Gradually, it has grown to be more general, and its leading centres have become more populous and powerful, until, now, a centre for the commerce of the whole world challenges discussion.

The invention of the mariner's compass united, in a measure, the great continents, and brought all lands within the views of commerce. The earth was sailed around, and all its prominent characteristics became known. Slowly, at first, but faster and faster, the productions of different climates and different conditions of people were brought to shipping ports and exchanged. Now, the new and wonderful instrumentalities, steam and electric telegraphs, are making all peoples into one commercial family, and concentrating their commerce in great centres—as London, Paris, and New York. It is a question of great interest whether one of these is to be the acknowledged heart and brain of the world's commerce; giving to the word commerce its widest signification. As yet commerce has not become organized as a complete unit, and, therefore, has not a universally acknowledged central city; though its development, within the last fifty years, has rapidly tended to centralization in the Island of Britain and the city of London. Paris is, and has long been, the acknowledged social centre of the world, due to its supremacy in the elegant arts and the amenities of high civilization.

Where will, probably, grow up the great cities of the future? I say, probably, for new elements may come into the calculation that are now unknown or unappreciated.

I shall assume that a city is an organism, springing from natural laws as inevitably as any other organism, and governed, invariably, in its origin and growth, by these laws. I shall also assume, and endeavor to prove, that these cities are to be on the North American Continent, and not far distant from the centre of the industrial power of this continent, *when well peopled and its resources well developed*, and in positions of easy access to commerce with other peoples with whom we exchange productions.

The growth of a city is analogous to the growth of a man.

The first and greatest necessity of a human being is food. The next is clothing; after which comes shelter and fuel. Food, clothing, houses and fuel. These are the prime and essential requisites. There can be no civilized life without all of them. But these are products of labor and skill. Where can labor and skill be used to greatest advantage, in the production of those necessities? The solution of this question will go far to fix a natural location for a great city.

But there are other necessities of *high* civilization, without which there can be no *great* city. There must be easy communication between it and other industrious and populous communities; good navigable channels, and, in our day, good roadways over the land. There needs be cheap and quick means of transportation, in order to effect that facile interchange of commodities which sustains high civilization. In discussing the question of the location of the future *greatest* city, it will be assumed that our continent will be settled by an industrious population, and most densely inhabited where food and other primary needs are most certainly attainable, and labor receives its best reward.

It is difficult for many persons to bring their minds to contemplate, as possible, a future differing materially from the present and the past. It is only those who have studied the course of human progress, and its tendency towards a more perfect society and a more general union of races, in commercial operations and social relations, who can appreciate, at their proper value, facts and arguments that go to show results differing from, and greater than any heretofore manifested. As men become more enlarged in their views, and have a truer comprehension of the laws governing matter and mind, they become fitted to more extended relations with their fellow-men. It is the same with societies and nations. They have more and more points of friendly contact, so that tribes grow into nations, and nations are enlarged to embrace all homogeneous races. As nations interact and mingle, international amenities ripen into a feeling of brotherhood, so that it is only following out the course of events to anticipate, as the crowning result, one great centre—one city of the world—which shall be the acknowledged focus and radiating point of its

wealth, intelligence and moral power. Such cities London and Paris are striving to be, and, in a qualified degree, are. They will approach that condition, when, in a few short years, there shall be communication by connecting telegraphy with all quarters of the globe, so that people the most distant may hold daily intercourse with each other. These cities, for a time, will remain the world's acknowledged chief centres for thought and action, and with increasing power.

But events in our time evolve rapidly, and especially in city growth. In a period of no more than half a century, the western movement of population and wealth, in one swelling tide, will have increased the power of the chief city of the Western Continent to a degree enabling it to overshadow the greatest European capitals. London and New York have each an established rate of increase, as proved by successive enumerations, in each decade of the current century. London has grown at a rate that doubles its number once in forty years, commencing in 1801. Carried forward through three duplications, it exhibits the following results: 1801, 950,863; 1841, 1,917,726; 1881, 3,835,452; 1921, 7,670,904. New York, commencing in 1800, with 60,489, has, with its dependent suburbs, doubled its numbers, on an average, in 15 years. Carrying that rate of increase up to 1920, its numbers will be 15,484,784. This will be considered an incredible result. With present and improving means of communication, the ability to grow and support great cities, as the country becomes populous and rich, must be admitted. Even with present means of transit, the outer boundaries of city and suburban residences extend tens of miles from the business centres of our cities. A radius of fifty miles will not be too extended to embrace, before the end of the present century, the people drawing their chief support from great cities. Within two hours' time all within that radius may be carried to or from the chief business centre and their homes; most of them within one hour. There is nothing, therefore, *in the greatness of this number*, to warrant distrust of its attainment. If its growth shall be checked, it will not be because our cities, *generally*, will receive a smaller proportion of our population than heretofore. It were easy to prove that the proportion will be increased. If New York fails of its