

## The Future Seat of Government

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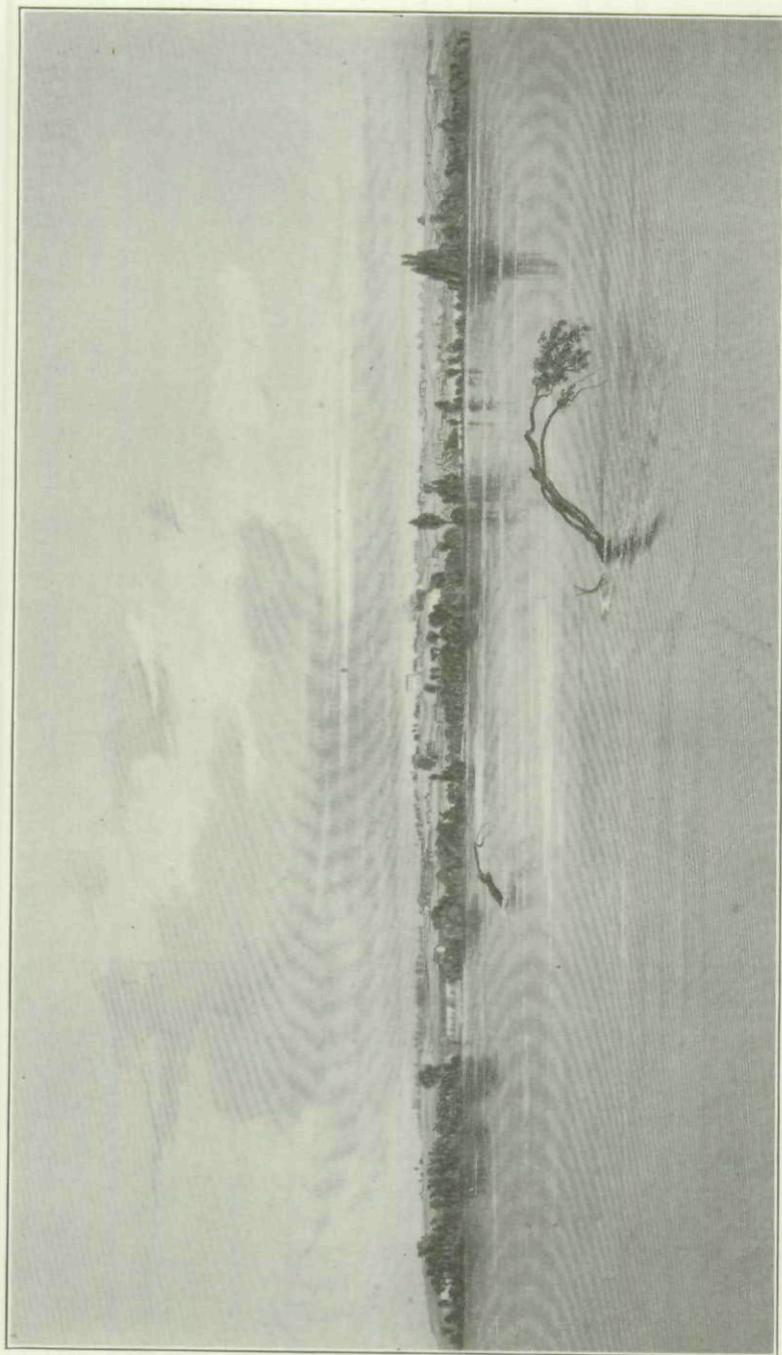
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**NAUVOO, ILLINOIS**

(From a steel engraving in "Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley," published in Liverpool and London in 1855.)

## THE FUTURE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

FROM GREGG'S DOLLAR MONTHLY AND OLD-SETTLERS' MEMORIAL,  
VOL. I, No 2, JUNE, 1873

Being compelled to use a page of larger type in this number of the *Dollar Monthly* than usual we have chosen to introduce a large theme—the discussion of the question, “Where should the future seat of government of the United States be?”

That it will be removed from Washington and located in a more central point, we think, is without a reasonable doubt. The chief reason why this should be done is perhaps in the simple necessity of giving it that central position; but when we seek for that suitable central point, there are other reasons to be considered.

In all the discussions we have seen in the papers on the subject, we do not remember that any claim has been advanced in favor of any point outside of the Mississippi Valley. Common consent seems to regard this valley as supplying that point somewhere within its magnificent and fertile boundaries. And the two points oftenest named, perhaps, have been St. Louis and Nauvoo.

The enthusiastic Reavis, seconded by other citizens, has been making mighty efforts in favor of the former place. Much money has been expended, much breath wasted, and much printer's ink used, in the effort to prove to the people of the nation that St. Louis is the point. We think there are valid reasons why it should not be selected, and as many, perhaps, why Nauvoo possesses all the requisites for a site for the great capital.

First, it ought not to be located where there is already a city standing in the way; but a locality should be chosen where there is comparatively no obstruction. Room should be the first consideration; room to build and occupy, to lay out and inclose grounds suitable, not only for the present, but for the future use for all time to come, of the greatest nation on the globe. A mere block or two on which to erect the necessary public buildings is far from being all that is wanted. Let us consider: The townships of Nauvoo, Sonora, and Monte Bello, contain just about as much territory as would be sufficient to meet the require-

ments. But why so much territory? Because in any plan for a new seat of government, there should be ample space for parks and public gardens, for boulevards and broad streets, for experimental grounds, for agricultural and horticultural uses, etc. And we venture the assertion that in all the broad land there is not another tract of country so happily situated, and possessing so fully all and only the conditions required, as that named.

What are these requisites? A healthy and invigorating climate; pure water; proximity to exhaustless fuel sources; large quantities of building material; a rich and varied soil; a great variety of natural scenery; magnificent prospects; and lastly, the waters of a magnificent river laving its curving and undulating shores. It has all these and more.

These three townships, measuring a river length of fifteen or sixteen miles, and an average of five, contain most magnificent sites for all the public buildings. Than Nauvoo possesses, none more beautiful can be found in the West, and scarcely less beautiful ones are to be seen on the river bluffs below. Sonora Township, or parts of it, could be transformed into one of the grandest parks in America. While the rolling lands of Monte Bello, and parts of Sonora, are just what will be required for the Agricultural Department.

When we remember that each department of the government, the War, the Navy, the Interior, and all the others, will need ground, not only for their extensive buildings, but for large quantities of material, and that these needs will be constantly increasing in the far future, it will be obvious to every one that the territory mentioned is none too large.

But how to accomplish a scheme at once so grand and so difficult, and keep it out of the influence and control of "rings" and "Credit Mobilier" companies, will be no easy task. Legislation should begin at once; or rather that legislation which continues the expenditure of large sums for the benefit of Washington should cease. The will of the people on that point should be so expressed that it will be known and obeyed by congressmen. Then a bill should be passed to organize a board of commissioners of one from each state, appointed by the governor and senate thereof, whose duty it shall be to examine and select three sites,

and report them, with all their boundaries and conditions, to the president of the United States, one of these sites to be selected by a vote of the whole people for the seat of government. Of course speculation would run high after the selection should be made, but it seems as if some such plan as is above outlined, would be successful in keeping the question of location out of the hands of manipulators.

Will it be accomplished, and how soon? There is a chance for some talented western congressman to immortalize his name by originating the scheme and carrying it through to realization. But, at the shortest, it is a work of years. A decade may pass before it shall be well begun. The hand that pens these lines will doubtless be stilled, but some of those who read them may witness its consummation. Strange things have happened in this little strip of territory since it was wrested from the Red Man. It has seen two embryo cities of grand proportions, like meteors, flash up and fade away within its limits. It is quite among the possibilities of the future that it may yet witness the building up of a greater city still—a permanent and enduring city—the seat of power and the pride of the whole country, the NEW CITY OF COLUMBIA!

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We hear there is now depending in the General Court a bill for preventing any person from practicing physic or surgery, until he has undergone a proper examination.—*The Boston Chronicle*, January 11, 1763.—(In the newspaper collection of the Historical Department of Iowa.)

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