

# A SUGGESTION.

## A Centennial Exposition for Tennessee to be Held in 1896.

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS ADMISSION TO THE UNION.

The Proposition Commended by The American to the Attention  
of the People of the State.

THE AMERICAN proposes for Tennessee a centennial exposition in commemoration of the admission of the State to the Union. That event occurred June 1, 1796, and its 100th anniversary is, therefore, two and a half years distant.

THE AMERICAN believes that many arguments sustain the suggestion, and it is commended to the serious attention of the press and people of the State. It is not a project to be casually regarded or lightly undertaken. Though conceiving it to be eminently appropriate and advisable, and confident that its execution would prove both comparatively easy and abundantly beneficial, it is an enterprise of a character whose success is absolutely dependent upon the ardent and united efforts of the people at large; and THE AMERICAN presents the subject to their thoughtful attention, therefore, as being those whose interest and consideration are first of all requisite to even any preliminary movements in the matter.

This is distinctively an age of object lessons, and of these, expositions, by common consent, have assumed front rank in their pleasing impressiveness, material results and inspiring accompaniments. The efforts of many nations, States and cities in this practical direction recently reached their culmination in the Quadri Centennial Exposition at Chicago, in which, unfortunately, Tennessee was not a participant. When properly managed, they are conceded to be inexpensive but powerful magnets for the attraction of capital, the dissemination of useful information, the cultivation of civic pride and the advancement of broadening civilization. To doubt this were to impeach the demonstrations of universal experience and to discredit results which intelligence has invariably perceived; and, though Tennessee has never figured in an exposition worthy of either its record or rank among the sisterhood of States, THE AMERICAN takes it for granted that its citizens are fully aware of the advantages which other communities realized from their active identification in such enterprises.

Though at various times the several cities of the State have made exhibits of their commerce and manufactures, more or less creditable, yet never in its history has an even approximately complete, reliable or satisfactory display been made of the resources of Tennessee either before its own people or the outer world; nor evidence of its growth in industries, trade, agriculture, the arts and sciences been accumulated; nor have its rare historical relics, personal and local, been gathered together to the fullest extent practicable for popular inspection. THE AMERICAN believes that the State is ripe for an organized movement, by and among the people of Tennessee to collect and display proofs of their peaceful prowess in transforming a wilderness into a proud commonwealth; to make exhibit of their unsurpassed agricultural, mineral and arboreal wealth; of their progress in commercial and industrial pursuits, and in all the avenues of expanding civilization during this first century of its existence, and to revive patriotic and glorious memories of the distinguished line of great men which the Volunteer State has given to the na-

tion, interesting reminders of whose personality and deeds are scattered from Memphis to Knoxville.

THE AMERICAN is confident that such an event would have a greater effect toward unifying the citizens of the State in enlightened and aroused determination to advance its material features than any movement which could be projected. In the presence of the inspiring and mellowing influences which would radiate from association around the achievements and memories of a common land and common heritage, the artificial barriers of East, Middle and West Tennessee would melt away, and the result would be a people more homogeneous in thought, ambitions, acts and sympathies than ever. The ends aimed at are none the less practical that they are patriotic; they do not commend themselves less to the stirring present that they are addressed to the unfolding future; and, standing at the expiration of the first century of its history, the manhood of Tennessee could offer no stronger assurance of high endeavor in the second than would be afforded by hearty co-operation in an enterprise conceived and sustained by pride in its past and loyalty to its present.

Every financial consideration, it is submitted, approves the proposition. As a matter of sentiment, the centennial year is most appropriate for an occasion of this character, and from a business standpoint that date is equally advisable. This is pre-eminently the age of development. The South, according to all indications, is entering upon the golden era of its history in material advancement. The assertion is sweeping, but accurate, that the world has never witnessed so heroic and rapid progress from poverty to plenty, from weakness to power, as has been made by these Southern States in the last quarter of a century. It happily occurs, however, that evidence accumulates to justify the conviction that they view this splendid record not as a measure of their capabilities, but rather as an intimation of their possibilities, and no man at all observant of the current of Southern thought and action, the ambition, energy and enlightenment of the Southern people, can doubt that they have gathered inspiration from the hard-wrought achievements of the last three decades and are determined to utilize the momentum thus gained to advance with equal steadiness and even accelerated steps to their highest destiny. Buoyant impulses, aggressive methods, unifying purposes and broadening conceptions characterize this homogeneous, hopeful people, who, with face to the front, view the future with deepening confidence and exalted aspirations.

In every direction we behold sure proof of a vigorous desire to employ every approved agency that promotes progress and expands prosperity. Latent wealth in mineral-gorged hills and valleys is being explored and grasped; idle capital is being applied in channels of commerce and manufactures long untouched; a campaign of education as to the inviting and vast opportunities for profitable labor and swift enrichment is being conducted by and among the Southern people themselves, and revelation is being made to the outer world of the undreamed natural riches which stretch from the seaboard to the Mississippi below the Ohio. Each of these favored Southern States has engaged in a rivalry not less genuine because it is generous for

pre-eminence in the inspiring drama of material development which is now unfolding. No argument is necessary to convince the people of Tennessee, a State which having shared the vanished reverses of the South, has borne itself gallantly in the restoration of its fortunes, that they should see to it that its future record should be worthy of its past, and that every factor for its upbuilding should be promptly adopted. Surely no time could be so appropriate for an emphatic declaration of this settled purpose as the centennial of its birth as a Commonwealth; nor, to borrow the language of the day, could a more striking, far-reaching, practical and inexpensive "advertisement" of its unsurpassed resources be made than the very nature of such an event and a first-class display of them would afford. It would challenge the attention of the country and inspire the citizenship of the State.

Once the proposition has received the approval of the public, the detailed plans could easily be formulated, so it is unnecessary to discuss them with minuteness here. THE AMERICAN, however, earnestly advocates an exposition of the highest possible character, thoroughly representative of the progress and resources of every section of the State, each to be placed in close contact with its management, on an equal basis of interest; comprehending every avenue of the active energies of the people—such an exposition, in a word, as would be a bird's-eye view of the achievements of Tennesseans in agriculture, commerce, manufactures, the arts and sciences; the part they have played in developing civilization, and a presentation of their natural resources to the fullest extent. Every city and all the larger towns in the State would, doubtless, erect buildings on the grounds, and every county should make an exhibit, be it great or small, for the history of each is a part of the annals of a common State and each confronts patriotic obligations to serve its future well. As for the place, THE AMERICAN believes that it may venture the opinion that Nashville would be the appropriate scene for an event of this character. It is the capital and is centrally located; the former a consideration of sentiment, it is true, but in a matter of this description of decided influence; the second circumstance is of prime business importance from the nature of the enterprise, it being necessary that the nearest point to all sections of the State be selected.

Such is the proposition in general. THE AMERICAN, venerating the history of Tennessee, proud of the achievements of its people and ambitious for its future, is convinced that a Centennial Exposition, for which we now have ample time to prepare, from a material standpoint, would be crowned with abounding and abiding benefits to the entire State and to every substantial interest; and that its indirect, though not less sure effects, through aroused and enlightened civic pride, would prove as practical as they would be patriotic. Let the press and the people be heard. THE AMERICAN, from time to time, will present other features of the enterprise, and its columns are open to the views of the people of every part of the State. Let it be borne in mind in considering the matter that the enterprise should be executed and maintained by the people and not by appropriations from the revenues of the State.—*The Nashville American, Jan. 14th.*



It gives me pleasure  
to endorse the proposition  
(advocated by the American) of  
holding in Nashville in  
1896, a Tenn. Centennial Ex-  
position to celebrate the  
one hundredth anniversary  
of the admission of that  
State to the Union.

Such Expositions, have  
in the past, been prope-  
lents of the greatest good,  
and I doubt not that in  
the future even greater  
successes await attend  
them - I bespeak for the  
Exposition the best wishes  
and the hearty concurrence  
of the citizens of the Old  
Tennessee State.