

The Editor's Page

IS THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION IN DANGER?

Three proposals to change the character of the association have been made. By opposing a meeting in a Southern city because of racial discrimination, certain members would make the society a reform organization. Once race matters are arranged to their satisfaction, labor questions, or something else might determine where the meetings would be held.

A second proposal is to change the name of the society and a third calls for a change in the name of the *Review*. Both have an illustrious history under their present names which are descriptive of their origin and of the largest number of the members. The society has been in a flourishing condition and is likely to remain so if it continues true to itself: an historical society devoted to the history of the great Mississippi Valley.

It is unfair to the founders and to the membership past and present of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association to try to use its organization, its members, its goodwill, and its finances to form a national society. To pursue this goal will likely result in division, strife, possibly a law suit, and certainly injury to the association. There ought to be an easier way to found a national society.

If such a program were adopted what would be the relations with the American Historical Association? Where would the meetings be held? In Boston, New York, Washington, and occasionally in Chicago? What would its attitude be towards the great interior valley of the United States? Would there not be need then for a new Mississippi Valley Historical Association which would have to be founded without the benefit of the organization and funds which have been established for this purpose?

Historians all over the world are welcome to join, but it is not necessary to remodel the society in order to attract more members. Bigness is not necessarily a virtue.

Efforts to destroy the present society should be rejected. It should not become a reform organization. Keep it a society that can meet in Oklahoma City, Lincoln, Minneapolis, Nashville, Columbus, Rock Island, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Madison, Detroit, and other midwest cities. Keep the present association by voting to retain the present names. In the future let us act like a historical society and not a reform organization.