

—more difficult to construct that engine than in the olden time to stir up the pride and passions of the people to wars and butcheries, resulting in great so-called glory.

The industrial, and consequent social, development of the Pacific coast, during a comparatively few years is more striking and important than has ever taken place in any other country during an equal period of time. Among the agencies which have contributed to this development, particularly in its later and better aspects, that of transportation has been the most potent and far-reaching in its operations and influence. Unquestionably, also, the chief agency in the department of transportation has been railroads. I apprehend that the correctness of these three propositions will be admitted without argument.

By way of further introduction to this biography a fourth proposition may not be out of order, for the soundness of which the facts, as they fall incidentally into the record, must be allowed to speak for themselves. It is this: That in railroad affairs on the Pacific coast Collis Potter Huntington has been among the foremost of creating and controlling spirits, and has contributed to this phase of Pacific coast development talent of the rarest order. If this be true—and there is not the remotest doubt of it, notwithstanding any popular fancy that may exist to the contrary—what follows? This, that his has been among the greatest individual forces contributed to the material and social growth of western North America; that in this building up of empire, under conditions new and strange, he has been conspicuous among the great factors associated with him.

Still he does not come into this history solely on account of his identification with railroad work on the Pacific slope, though this is the central idea of the study, for, apart from transportation, his individuality was otherwise felt and recognized in California and the east.