

junction of the North and South Forks, is not far from three-fourths of a mile; its average depth is *six inches*. In the months of September and October the river is at its lowest stage.

The lands lying along this river are a portion of the land granted to the Union Pacific railroad, and the company are offering liberal terms and great inducements to settlers. Much of the land is as fine agricultural and grazing land as can be found in any section of the Northwest. Should it be deemed necessary to irrigate these plains, as some are inclined to think is the case, there is plenty of fall in either fork, or in the main river, for the purpose, and during the months when irrigation is required, there is plenty of water for that purpose, coming from the melting snow on the mountains. Ditches could be led from either stream and over the plains at little expense. Many, however, claim that in ordinary seasons, irrigation is unnecessary.

From Omaha to the Platte River, the course of the road is southerly, until it nears the river, when it turns to the west, forming, as it were, an immense elbow. Thence along the valley, following the river, it runs to Kearny, with a slight southerly depression of its westerly course; but from thence to the North Platte it recovers the lost ground, and at this point is nearly due west from Fremont, the first point where the road reaches the river. That is as far as we will trace the course of the road at present.

The first view of the Platte Valley is impressive, and should the traveler chance to behold it for the first time in the spring or early summer, it is then very beautiful; should he behold it for the first time, when the heat of the summer's sun has parched the plains, it may not seem inviting; its beauty may be gone, but its majestic grandeur still remains. The eye almost tires in searching for the boundary of this vast expanse, and longs to behold some rude mountain peak in the distance, as proof that the horizon is not the girdle that encircles this valley.

When one gazes on mountain peaks and dismal gorges, on foaming cataracts and mountain torrents, the mind is filled with awe and wonder, perhaps fear of Him who hath created these grand and sublime wonders. On the other hand, these lovely plains and smiling valleys—clothed in verdure and decked with flowers—fill the mind with love and veneration for their

Creator, leaving on the heart the impression of a joy and beauty which shall last forever.

Returning to Fremont—and the railroad—we proceed seven miles to

Ames—formerly called Ketchum—only a side track. Near this station, and at other places along the road, the traveler will notice fields fenced with cottonwood hedge, which appears to thrive wonderfully. Eight miles further we reach

North Bend—which is situated near the river bank, and surrounded by a fine agricultural country, where luxuriant crops of corn give evidence of the fertility of the soil. The place has materially improved within the last few years and now has some fine stores, two hotels, a grain elevator, and about 75 dwellings and places of business, and a population of about 350. Young cottonwood groves have been set out in many places—good fences built, and altogether the town has a progressive appearance.

Leaving the station, for a few miles the railroad track is laid nearer the river's bank than at any point between Fremont and North Platte. Seven miles from here we arrive at

Rogers—a new station, and apparently one of promise—7 4-10 miles further is

Schuyler—the county seat of Colfax county, containing about 800 inhabitants, and rapidly improving. It has five churches, two very good hotels, with courthouse, jail, school-houses, many stores, a grain elevator, and several small manufactories. The bridge over the Platte River, two miles south, centres at this town a large amount of business from the south side of the river.

From Schuyler it is 7 8-10 miles to

Richland—formerly called Cooper—a small side-track station, from which it is eight miles to

Columbus—the county seat of Platte county—eight miles west of Richland. It contains about 2,000 inhabitants, has two banks, six churches, several schools, good hotels, and two weekly newspapers,—the *Platte Journal* and the *Era*. The Hammond is the principal hotel.

Columbus—from its location in the midst of the finest agricultural lands in the Platte Valley, with the rich valley of the Loup on the north—has advantages that will, at no distant day, make it a city of many thousand inhabitants.