

bottoms along this stream are generally about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles wide, and their soil is a rich, black vegetable mould. This valley, where it is timbered, and the high prairies generally, are everywhere covered with a variety of grasses—some poor and scanty, but far more commonly luxuriant and heavy. About 265 miles from the mouth of the Kansas, the Republican Fork obtains an elevation of 1,500 feet, and is making its way rapidly towards the "Father of Waters."

The Smoky Hill Fork bears away to the southwest, towards a milder climate and a somewhat deeper soil. This branch also traverses a delightful country, which will soon be swarming with active, industrious inhabitants.

The next question, then, is: At what points along these natural channels of commerce, will the largest towns spring up, or be born full-grown, as some have of late in our country on more sterile soils? The Oregon, California, and Santa Fe routes along the Kansas, already show the beginnings of such places; and settlements have been formed and claims made for some distance around the vicinity of the supposed town-sites, while equally as rich soil, between these locations, remain unclaimed. Among the places where settlements have been made on the road from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley, are: Wild Cat Creek, Big Blue River, Rock Creek, Vermilion, Lost Creek, Catholic Mission, Soldier Creek, Grasshopper River, Stranger Creek, Hickory Point, Salt Creek, &c., all on the north side of Kansas river. Then, on the south of that stream, where the Santa Fe road crosses the tributaries of the

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