

KANSAS AND THE COUNTRY BEYOND.

OF the vast territory embraced within our national boundaries, stretching from ocean to ocean, three-fifths lie west of the Mississippi, that great Mediterranean river which bisects it from north to south, dividing it into two vast and strongly distinctive and dissimilar sections. In this estimate I do not include the territory recently purchased from Russia. The one is partially occupied in all its parts; the other is only beginning to be occupied around its borders. The one is now the home of more than nine-tenths of our people; a century hence, it may be, the dwelling-place of a majority of the American people will be in the other. The one is a land of forests and navigable rivers, with mountain systems of moderate altitude, and with topographical features greatly diversified, often beautiful, but rarely grand; the other, for the most part, is made up of vast prairies of surpassing beauty and fertility, and of stupendous mountains, rich in almost all varieties of minerals, yet presenting barriers to human progress more formidable, perhaps, than are to be found anywhere else on the earth's surface. The one is a good country, surpassingly good, as the past progress and prosperity of our people abundantly attest; but no man can travel long over the matchless region which lies beyond the river,—a garden three times the area of France, with mountains beyond sufficient to supply the ever-advancing world with precious metals, and an ocean beyond them, with more people upon its shores and islands than are found on all the other waters of the globe,—without coming to the strong conviction that the trans-Mississippi section is still better.

But this portion of the earth's surface is as unique as it is stupendous. While one part is sublime in altitude and rugged grandeur, the other and nearer part is equally so in its vast extent and its continuous yet ever-varying beauty. Those prairies