

curious and pretty, consisting generally of a congeries of globular masses, each made up of many points, all curiously connected by a net-work of delicate but strong external fibres and pricks. They are said to bear pretty flowers, but they are not yet in bloom.

Along the margins of the streams up in that part of the country there are boundless quantities of wild plums of excellent quality. Colonel Fisher told me that he could load wagons with them. Ladies use them largely for preserves, jellies, &c. Wild grapes and gooseberries abound.

So far as I saw, the buffalo grass region, or "the plains," as this portion of our continent has long been called, is a beautiful and cheerful-looking country—gently undulating, and here and there presenting hills or *buttes* that partake of the character of ruggedness. In some places, distant from watercourses, it looks like the ocean, and, like the sea, it has its wrecks; for look over it when and where you will, you see the stark remains of its monarchs, the buffaloes, bleaching in the sun and wind. Waste and desolate as it appears to the weary traveller in its natural condition, it only awaits the hand of enlightened industry and taste to make it beautiful and home-like—more beautiful than Illinois, for it is not so monotonous.

Of the meteorology of this country I of course cannot speak with confidence. It is said by some to be too dry for successful agriculture. Perhaps it is; but surely we saw rain enough. Almost constantly there is a fresh and invigorating breeze, often rising into a stiff gale. This is the clearest atmosphere I ever saw. Men have to be careful how they estimate distances here by the eye, for objects miles off look as if they might be reached on foot in a few minutes. Chills and fevers, I am told, never originate here, and it was a frequent remark among our excursionists—"How healthy the people look!" The sunsets and the nocturnal heavens are far more glorious than they are with us.

The most serious want of this country is timber, which becomes more and more scarce as we go west. So far, wood for fuel, here at Salina, is worth eight dollars per cord; but until more can be grown it cannot but become more and more scarce and expensive. No coal, properly so called, has yet been mined in this part of the State; but it exists in abundance in several localities near the lower end of this road, in the southern part of the State and in Colorado, east and south of Pike's Peak, on the line of this road. In this neighborhood a vein of lignite exists, some six or seven feet thick. I have a small sample of it; but of its value as fuel I am not able to speak confidently. The time will come, however, when there will be no difficulty