

out in the morning I shall meet the party at Abeliene, halfway between this and Junction City, and return with them.

The Smoky Hill, in flood, has all the characteristics of a great river—rising day after day after the rain has ceased and the ground become dry—and certainly this morning it has the appearance of a great river. Its heavy volume of water, of the same color as the Missouri, rolls onward, in a smooth but by no means slow current. So far as heard, the railroad has sustained no serious damage. This flood is the greatest that has occurred on this river for nine years. The Solomon, which comes in about twelve miles below, is higher than it was ever known to be.

THE QUESTION OF ROUTES.

At this place the Santa Fe trade at present concentrates. Wagons drawn by oxen, and manned by Mexicans, are almost continually to be found at the railroad station. These Mexicans are singular-looking beings, as swarthy as Indians, and many of them have the Indian features more or less strongly marked. Dull, good-natured, but profoundly ignorant, they move about their work like machines. They are quite cheerful, and the soft and musical tones of their language or *patois* are in strong contrast with the strong and harsh utterances of their Anglo-Saxon brethren of the Denver trade.

I meet out here many intelligent men who are more or less familiar with New Mexico. Although broken up by mountains, it has many very fine valleys, fertile and beautiful, and they all unite in representing it as immensely rich in minerals, especially gold and silver. But they say that it is impossible that either the agricultural, the pastoral, or the mineral wealth of that territory can ever be developed until it is united with the rest of the country by rail. To work its mines requires ponderous machinery, which it is simply impossible to transport by the existing means of conveyance; and even agriculture must be carried on in the most primitive modes until a railway shall bring the improved implements of the day into that isolated and benighted region.

But even more important than all these is the opening of the avenue through which shall flow into that degraded and dark-minded population the lights of true Christian civilization. Both priests and people have fallen so low that nothing but influences from without can be instrumental in raising them up. They are now our fellow-citizens, as well as our fellow-men, and as such they have claims upon us which we may not lightly ignore.

With the lights we now have no one can pretend to estimate how