

become more numerous, they will multiply. There is a small species of blackbird here, which is very useful in destroying insects, especially grasshoppers, which are occasionally a great pest. This year there are few, if any, up here, but down near the Missouri they are pretty numerous. They have, however, not done any serious harm.

Rattlesnakes are somewhat numerous on "the plains" west of this; but I have not seen any. I have been about as far west as the celebrated spot where our excursion friends of last fall killed the buffalo; but as the wave of civilized life, led on by the Union Pacific Railway, has rolled on about eighty miles since then, I did not expect to see any. I, however, helped to eat a fresh one at Clear Creek, a little this side of Fort Harker. The Indians and the buffaloes are rapidly melting away before the resistless march of a stronger race. Before this mighty onward movement all that cannot be assimilated must be destroyed. The buffalo cannot be domesticated, nor the Indian civilized, so they are apparently alike devoted to extermination. Both are surrounded; the cordon of civilization is pressing closer and closer around them, and the issue, so far as we can see, is as inevitable as fate. In another letter I shall speak more fully on this painful subject; only remarking now, that, from all I hear, it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the Indian, with all his savagery, than for some white men whom our country has clothed with authority, and into whose hands it has placed the destiny of these apparently doomed wretches.

No part of the earth's surface has ever passed so suddenly from the condition of a vast, trackless, desolate abode of wild beasts and roving savages to one of complete and beautiful Christian civilization as this; and probably no other could have been so quickly transformed. As it was in the primitive earth, God's own hand has planted a garden here, and all that is required of man is that he shall go in and occupy, and dress it, and keep it. Here he is not called upon to wage a life-long battle with heavy forests and perplexing brambles, for the land is already a rich meadow, decked with flowers and ready for the plough and the seed; while the railway, sent here by the agency of well-directed, yea, Heaven-directed enterprise, with its concomitants, fills out all the material conditions required. Now let the Bible, with its blessed influences, and living teachers of both schools and churches, together with the press, be sent forward, and the old exploded myth of an "American desert" will vanish even from the memory of men; for under the operation of the forces now in action, this long talked of "desert" will soon blossom as the rose. Indeed, it is literally a flowery desert now.