

standpoint from which to view the great trans-Mississippi region than any other. It is its natural metropolis; but I saw enough while far up the Kansas and the Smoky Hill to satisfy me that St. Louis will have a hard and wholesome struggle for the trade of the mighty and matchless empire which is springing up behind her. Here, almost literally, a nation is born in a day, and the region through which I have just been travelling is very nearly as accessible to Chicago as to St. Louis, and to New York as to Pennsylvania.

I propose now to speak of the

#### MINERAL RESOURCES OF KANSAS.

Until I visited the State, my impression was that, although Kansas was very beautiful and very fertile, its mineral resources did not amount to much. I was not even aware, until I came out last fall, that it has more abundant, cheaper, and better building stone than any other State in the Union can boast; and the best of it is, that these stone do not at all mar the soil or break the face of the country. In my letters last fall I spoke briefly of these regular and far extended quarries of magnesian limestone; but as I have given the subject more close attention on this more leisurely excursion, I beg leave to return to the subject.

In the neighborhood of Lawrence, forty miles above the mouth of the Kansas, this stone exists in abundance, but the quality, as a building material, is inferior. The strata are thin and the color is not pretty. At Topeka, twenty miles further up, the quality is greatly better, and many very handsome dwellings are to be seen in and around that city constructed of it. It underlies all the upper surface of the country, and crops out of the faces of the bluffs with such regularity that it might be mistaken at a distance for tolerably well laid artificial walls of range work.

As we ascend the river it becomes better and better. At Manhattan, a pretty and flourishing town at the mouth of the Big Blue river, it is surpassingly beautiful, of a very light, delicate and lively stone color, and is so abundant, and so easily quarried and worked, that it is cheaper as a building material than either brick or frame. It is harder than at Fort Riley and Junction City, so that, although it works easily under the hammer and chisel, they do not attempt to saw it like timber, as they do at the latter places. I, however, prefer the color of the Manhattan stone to any I ever saw. At Manhattan it is something like the color of diluted milk; at Junction City it is more like cream. But I suppose it is a matter of taste.

From some distance below Fort Riley to a still greater distance