

line to Denver. The distance from Pond Creek to Denver is 187 miles; to Santa Fé, by the stage road, it is 402 miles. Both lines pass over good ground for railroad purposes, and through regions well adapted to the rearing of stock. I am told that the plains of Colorado are not adapted to agriculture, except where irrigation is feasible; but as it is not very long since we were told that this whole region, through a considerable portion of which our party travelled with great delight, was an uninhabitable desert, this story about the indispensableness of irrigation may be of the same kind. For more than four hundred miles west of the Missouri river, as we can testify, no irrigation is needed. On the route to Denver, the line of the road will pass through extensive tracts of excellent pine timber, and over inexhaustible mines of coal.

THE MOUNTAIN SNOWS.

Everything on this side of Denver is very good. There is neither desert nor difficulty of any kind, but what lies beyond Denver causes prudent men to pause and consider. *It seems now to be a settled point that the Union Pacific Railway, Eastern Division, will be carried through New Mexico and Arizona to its ultimate and original destination, and not through the stupendous system or labyrinth of mountains, which begins at Denver, and ends only on the banks of the Sacramento.* Into the natural gorges of these mountains, and into the deep artificial cuts required for a railroad, the light, dry snows of that region will drift in such quantities as to defy all human skill and power to keep them clear. Even as late as the first of the present month, as I have been informed, some of the passes through the mountains, between the heads of the Platte and the valley of Utah, were still covered with from ten to twenty feet of snow — not snow which had fallen upon them, but which had been driven in by the winds, and over which men and teams were passing as upon solid ground. But locomotives and trains cannot run upon the top of snow-drifts, and where they are so enormous, it is certain that they cannot run through them. It is equally certain that those long, deep, narrow natural gorges or artificial cuts cannot be kept clear by any muscular or mechanical force that can be employed for that purpose, for if cleared to-day, they may be filled again to-morrow. To travel through such a region in the winter season — and the winter in those mountains is nearly half the year — would be attended with such frightful peril that few would have the hardihood to brave it; for imagine a passenger train caught in a snow-drift, far from any human habitation, and buried, perchance, in a few hours, under a snow-bank in which even the train itself would soon cease to be a distinguishable object.