

[While compiling these letters for publication in this form, I saw a letter from a gentleman of great energy and intelligence, with whom I am well acquainted, and who is exploring that country. He writes:

“This part of Colorado is said to be the richest and best in the whole territory; and with its splendid climate, tempered in the summer by the mountain breezes, and so mild in winter, that such snow as falls does not lie more than two or three days, its pure, dry atmosphere — these valleys being a mile above tide — together with the views of the Spanish Peak, Greenhorn Mountain, and the main range of the Rocky Mountains, which are constantly visible, I honestly believe that, when made accessible by the railroad, it will be the great sanitarium of the United States.”

In another place he says: “The country I passed through yesterday, at the foot of the Raton Mountains, and in the valleys of numerous creeks which empty into the Purgatoire, is very rich and beautiful, and contains numerous ranches. It resembles the best part of East Tennessee, is exceedingly healthy, and well protected from the extreme rigors of winter, so that animals do not require to be sheltered.”

Again he says: — “The pine timber a few miles west of Trinidad, on the Purgatoire, and extending up that mountain country, is represented as exceedingly large and abundant. Mr. Bransford thinks that Eastern Kansas will rely for its supply of lumber upon this country as soon as the railroad is built.” He fully confirms all I have stated as to the abundance of coal in that country.]

Skirting the eastern base of this mountain for over one hundred miles — the mountain being on the right and the vast and fertile plains of northwestern Texas on the left — passing Fort Union, the great distributing depot for government supplies for all the Southwest — the line turns more to the west, and reaches the Rio Grande at the town of Albuquerque, seventy-five miles southwest of Santa Fé.

NEW MEXICO.

Near the head of Purgatoire River the line enters the territory of New Mexico, after having run about two hundred miles diagonally across the southeast corner of Colorado — the most fertile portion of that territory, and in which, as already stated, there are extensive deposits of coal and forests of pine timber. New Mexico has an area

specimens of excellent bituminous coal, which he took from veins of from eleven to thirteen feet in thickness, which crop out of the slope of the Raton mountain, 170 miles southwest of Pond Creek, on the natural route of the Union Pacific Railway of the Kansas. It is hardly possible to estimate the value of such a coal mine in such a locality.