

American continent, for it is the only part of the continent where two large rivers rise immediately together and flow in opposite directions—the Columbia cutting its way entirely through the mountains on a water level to the Pacific; and the Missouri connecting with the great plains bordering on the lakes. The Rocky Mountains at this point are really so low, that the miners, last summer, actually took large streams in ditches from the waters of the Missouri, over the divide to the Pacific side for mining purposes. In consequence of the low passes through to the Pacific, the climate is warmer than it is in the mountains in the latitude of Salt Lake City, 400 miles due south. I crossed the summit of the Rocky Mountains near Deer Lodge Valley, in Montana, on the 17th of December. There was no snow; the roads dry and dusty, and the weather mild and pleasant, and none of the streams frozen over. When I reached Salt Lake City, the snow on the Wasatch and Rocky Mountain ranges was twenty-six inches deep, and the night we crossed the Wasatch range, the thermometer stood at ten degrees below zero, and Green River and all those streams in the mountains had been frozen over six weeks, so that the stage rolled over on the ice. Such was the difference in the climate of the two routes. The differences in the real wealth and resources of the two routes is perhaps even greater than that of climate. The central route, after it leaves the mining country of Nevada, around Virginia City, passes up the Humboldt country toward Salt Lake, for a distance of 500 or 600 miles, over the most desolate and barren country on the American continent. The country has neither mines, timber, nor any other redeemable quality about it. Salt Lake Valley is a small and rather fertile valley; the only fertile spot for hundreds of miles. From Salt Lake City to Denver, a distance of six hundred miles, the route lies over an alkali and sage plain. On the other hand, there is not one mile on the northern route that does not either furnish timber, grazing, agricultural lands, or minerals, and, in some instances, all together. Montana is just in its infancy; its mines scarcely prospected; and yet, last season, according to the report of the Treasury Department, Montana stood second on the list in the amount of gold produced; California producing \$25,000,000; Montana, \$18,000,000; Idaho and Colorado, \$17,000,000 each; and Nevada, \$16,000,000.

“The mountains of Montana are a perfect net-work of quartz ledges, immensely rich in gold and silver. Five years from this time, I believe there will be as much as \$40,000,000 of gold and silver taken from the mines of Montana per year; more than one-fourth enough to build and equip the Northern Pacific Road, ready for use. There are also immense mines of coal, iron, copper, and lead, in the country. The north-