

Why do people come West?

This article, published in the Kansas Monthly, describes why nineteenth-century settlers were eager to immigrate to Kansas. It refers in particular to the fertility of soil in Kansas and its appeal to Eastern farmers.

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"GO WEST YOUNG MAN, GO WEST."—HORACE GREELEY.

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THE KANSAS MONTHLY.

J. S. BOUGHTON, PUBLISHER.

OUR PURPOSE.

In the incipient stage of this enterprise, we had thought "The West" would more clearly indicate the aim and object of our periodical than any other name. But as the immense field such a name would cover gradually revealed itself, we were induced to indicate in our christening more definitely the ground we expect to occupy. Our field is Kansas,—our object, its advancement in material wealth, and all those agencies which make a great and prosperous State. Its natural resources, its advantages of climate, its marvelous growth in population, and all material interests, and the high position it is taking in educational matters, will all be truthfully set forth in its columns. The numerous questions which are constantly arising in the mind of the immigrant in regard to the conditions of things in Kansas, the advantages it offers to those seeking homes, its laws, customs of the people, and state of society, will be elaborately and carefully answered.

Our first number is an infant—merely an embryotic emblem of what THE KANSAS MONTHLY will one day become.

WHY DO PEOPLE COME WEST?

When Horace Greeley gave the advice which has been taken as the motto of this paper, he could not have foreseen the magnitude of the western movement. His vision, prophetic as it was, could not have witnessed two hundred thousand people migrating to Kansas alone, within the limits of a single year. This immigration has not come from the crowded districts of the Old World, but from different portions of our own country. The motives which have impelled this vast army to leave comfortable homes, pleasant surroundings, and all the advantages of old and settled institutions, to place a thousand miles or more between themselves and friends, and to commence the difficult task of

making new homes in a new, and to them comparatively unknown country, is a subject of interesting inquiry. While it is a fact that all, or nearly all, come for the purpose of securing for themselves homes, it is by no means the utterly homeless that come west. The inmates of the crowded tenements of our eastern cities still remain in their old haunts; even the unemployed mechanics of the manufacturing centers do not, as a rule, come west. It is principally from the rural communities that our immigration comes. The farmers of the East are realizing the fact that they can no longer compete with the West in the raising of grain and stock. The best eastern farms, under a high state of cultivation, produce no larger crops than can be produced on the prairies of Kansas the first year. While the difference in cost of land, as well as the cost of cultivating, harvesting, &c., is as one to ten in favor of Kansas. It is a fact that the interest alone on the value of an eastern farm, for one year, will purchase the same amount of land in Kansas, and put in a crop that will yield as much money as the eastern farm, and with much less labor of cultivating and harvesting. It is cheap lands, ease of cultivation, and large productions, that are turning people westward, and the movement will continue until an equilibrium is established, until farms in the West, by reason of improvements, in better houses, barns, &c., and the presence of a denser population, become more nearly of the value of farms east.

OWN YOUR HOMES.

John Adams said that "The ownership of land is essential to industrial thrift and dignity and national strength and prosperity." Every man who has a homestead has given bonds to society for good behavior, and takes a deeper interest in the public welfare. There can be no communistic tendencies among people who own their homes. Every householder has a personal interest in upholding the government, and in the protection of property. It has been truly said that "The hope of

America is the homes of America," and no wiser statesmanship ever controlled the American Congress than when the Homestead law was passed, by which every American citizen, or person having declared their intention to become such, can acquire absolute title in fee simple to 160 acres of the public domain, by merely living upon and cultivating the same. The number of homes already established under this law approaches half a million, and the strength which the Government has thus acquired, to say nothing of individual happiness, cannot be easily estimated. Every encouragement should be given the people to own their homes. In Switzerland, out of four hundred and eighty-five households, four hundred and sixty-five are householders. When the same ratio prevails in America there need be no further fears of the downfall of Republican institutions. The adornment of homes, the planting of trees, the trimming of lawns, the general fixing up of both exterior and interior of houses, follows close on the heels of ownership. A country where the people own their homes is a beautiful one, whether they be rich or poor, whether the landscape be dotted with cottages or palaces. The growing interest taken in home life and home adornment, the attention our best writers and educators are giving to this subject, and the eagerness with which the people absorb their instruction, is one of the most hopeful signs of modern civilization.

A full list of all the newspapers published in Kansas, will appear in our next issue. It was impossible to perfect it for this number.

The population of the State by counties, also, the valuation of property as returned by the Board of Assessors for 1878, will be given in our next number.

The largest water power in Kansas is at Lawrence; two large flouring mills, a foundry and machine shop, one elevator, and a wooden ware factory, are run by it, and there is at least 3000 horse power to spare.