

a wide border of coniferous trees, which become smaller and more limited in number of species as we approach the verge of the forests, stretches across the continent; while toward the south deciduous forests prevail, but are interspersed with large areas of pines of various kinds. The sombre coniferous forests of the north are continuous over vast regions, which, from their high latitudes and the poverty of their soil, will never be cultivated to any great extent. This great coniferous belt has a crescentic form, curving southward from Labrador to the far Northwest, keeping Hudson Bay on its northern side. The distribution of our forests appears to be governed almost entirely by existing climatic conditions, although it may be modified to some extent by the geological character of different districts; and some of the peculiarities of their present distribution may be due to former conditions affecting their dispersion.

Beyond the northern limit of the forests on the mainland of the continent there is a large triangular area to the north-west and another to the north-east of Hudson Bay, called the Barren Grounds, which are destitute of trees solely on account of the severity of the climate, as the other conditions do not appear to differ from those of the adjacent wooded regions to the south. The treeless region of the Western States and the south-western part of the Northwest Territories of Canada are called plains as distinguished from the prairies, which often are partially wooded. The latter occupy an immense space between the plains and the forest regions to the east and north-east. The plain and prairie conditions are also due to climate, and not, as some have supposed, to fires having swept away formerly existing forests. This is shown by the contours of the lines marking the western limits of the various kinds of trees which prevail in the east, as well as from the absence of water-courses, which would exist if sufficient rain had fallen in comparatively recent times to have maintained forest growth.

Although the Dominion embraces about half of the continent, only some ninety out of the 340 species of the forest trees of North America are found within her borders, including the Pacific slope. Yet the area under timber in