

north and south, conforming to the lines of coast and mountain ranges, by which their peculiarities in each case are governed.

We have, then, five separate and natural divisions of the West, each characterized by a climate of its own, depending upon its natural condition, as follows :—

1st—The Plains.

2nd—The Rocky Mountains.

3rd—The Interior of British Columbia.

4th—The Coast Mountains.

5th—The Pacific Littoral.

Let us take these up in reverse order, and so prepare ourselves for a study of the Plains, in which most persons are mainly interested.

It is almost needful, however, to consider the whole West as one, at first, in order to get at the philosophy of the subject in each separate case.

Remembering the northerly position of Canada, which gives it the general climatic features belonging to the Temperate Zone, we may say that every local peculiarity of climate in the West—at least beyond the central part of the Plains—is due to the arrangement of the currents of the Pacific Ocean, and its winds, on one hand, and to the position of the mountains in reference to them on the other. The reaction of ocean and mountains—of their influences, that is—upon each other, is really what makes the climate; and as the ocean currents and world-winds flow uniformly and unceasingly, while the mountains stand as the very type of permanence,—this reaction is necessarily constant, followed, of course, by uniformity in the visible effects.

With the course of the Gulf Stream all are familiar, and rightly attribute to its indirect influence the warm and moist climate of Great Britain and France, though those countries are as near to the arctic pole as the frigid cliffs of Labrador, where perennial winter holds sway.

Now, in the Pacific the case is the same. A great warm current out of the tropical seas courses up the eastern coast of Asia until it is fended away by the headlands of Siberia