

and third prairie-steppes, rising in the east, above the line of elevation between Pembina Mountain and the Basquia Hills to an altitude of about 1,600 feet above the sea, and in its more western extension on the third prairie (west of the Grand Coteau, Eagle Hills and Thickwood Hills) to from 2,000 to over 4,000 feet. It encloses many sterile tracts, but over a large portion of its area the soil appears to be of good fertility. Ranging west of the Pembina, Riding, Porcupine, and Basquia Hills, it extends over the vast region traversed by the Qu'Appelle River, the Upper Assiniboine, north and south branches of the Saskatchewan, and the upper course of the Arthabasca, and rises gradually into the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The eastern section—and probably the greater portion of the entire district—is occupied by Cretaceous strata, consisting mostly of sandstones and shaly clays in generally horizontal beds, overlaid more or less by sands of Glacial or Post-Glacial age; whilst towards the west, but without any strongly-marked lines of demarcation, these Cretaceous strata are succeeded by Cainozoic deposits. The latter consist chiefly of sandy clays, with associated beds of lignite and ironstone. Lignite occurs also in the Cretaceous strata of the district. In many of its beds, as in the Qu'Appelle valley and southwards generally, it presents the usual woody or earthy character, but on the Upper Saskatchewan and elsewhere, much of it is of a comparatively dense compact quality, and closely resembles ordinary bituminous coal.

(4.) *The Mountain District.*—Includes the foot-hills and eastern ranges of the Rocky Mountains, and extends westward to the boundary-line of British Columbia. This eastern portion of the Rocky Mountain chain enters the North-west Territory in the form of several distinct ranges which curve towards the north-west, and appear gradually to intermingle. Southwards, the mountains present an average elevation of about 8,000 feet above the sea, with occasional points of higher altitude; but in their northern extension—as seen in the transverse valley of the Peace River, and elsewhere towards the Arctic Ocean—their altitude becomes greatly diminished. They are composed essentially of dolomites, limestones, and sandstones, apparently of Devonian, or of Devonian and Carboniferous age. Probably, older Palæozoic and more recent formations, will eventually be found amongst them. In some few places their uplifted strata still retain their original horizontality, but as a rule they occur in highly-tilted, broken, and contorted beds, with deeply escarped faces