

change in the features of the forest; resiniferous evergreens, of the family of the Pines, now predominate, and attain the most gigantic dimensions. All the species, and they are numerous, have peculiar traits, and form so many curious and distinct species, of which little is yet known more than their botanical designation. Other remarkable forest trees, also imperfectly known, inhabit this great range of mountains, which continues uninterruptedly into the interior of Mexico in its southern course; while on the north, following the sources of the Missouri and the Oregon, and after thus dividing the waters which flow into the Atlantic and Pacific, it is, at length, merged in the "Shining Mountain" which send off their distant tributaries to the Arctic ocean.

The plains of the Upper Platte, those of the Oregon and of Northern California, a region bereft of summer rains, forming extensive barren steppes, like those of Siberia, present no forests, scarcely an alluvial belt along the larger streams of sufficient magnitude to afford even fuel for the camp fire of the wandering hunter or the erratic savage. The scanty drift wood, borne down from the mountains, the low bitter bushes of the arid plain, even the dry ordure of the bison, is collected for fuel, and barely suffices to prepare a hasty meal for the passing traveller; who, urged by hunger and thirst, hurries over the desert, a region doomed to desolation, and, amidst privations the most appalling, lives in the hope of again seeing forests and green fields in lieu of arid plains and bitter weeds, which tantalized our famished animals with the fallacious appearance of food, like the cast-away mariner raging with thirst, though surrounded with water as fatal to the longing appetite as poison.

Towards the shores of the Pacific, and on the banks of the Oregon, we again meet with the agreeable features of the forest.