

just where his fancy leads him, save the gullies, cut by tiny streams through these terraces, which necessitate a scramble down and a climb up the opposite side.

As to the age of the terrace formation, I should hesitate to offer an opinion. The terraces placed the greater distance from the coast, and on the higher elevations, are, in all probability, of a greater antiquity than are these we are traversing; and marked alterations must have taken place in the rearrangement of the materials composing them whilst the continent was being gradually upheaved. Dr. Hector, with whom I travelled through California, thinks—and I am quite disposed to agree with him, although I do not set myself up as a profound thinker on matters geological—that “the shores of the intricate channels and inlets of the Pacific coast of British North-western America, if elevated from the sea, would present but a slight difference from the sides of the narrow valleys in the Rocky Mountains, at an altitude of three thousand five hundred feet.” It is very difficult to say whether the continent has been, in later times, depressed in the mass, or whether upheaval has been greater in the centre than along its margins. The latter theory, for many reasons space forbids my naming, appears to be the more reasonable supposition.

Another thing puzzles me as I ride along. Lakes, large and small, are everywhere visible on these plains, having no apparent inlet or outlet for their contents; and yet the water, as I drink it, is cold, fresh, and pure, as if from a bubbling spring. The shingle, washed clean like that on a sea-beach, round their margins, indicates a rise and fall in the water, yet the Doctor tells me few, if any, of the lakes are ever known to dry up, and further, that they never grow muddy or become stagnant. One can hardly reconcile the belief in a subterranean supply, and yet it appears very difficult to account for their purity and permanence on these shingle deposits in any other way. Encircling all their pools, are splendid growths of cotton-wood, maple, and oak.

As the eye wanders over this immense parklike-looking tract, the surface appears broken by numerous small rounded hills, all covered alike with “bunch grass,” reminding one of the “islands,” so called, on the Texan prairies; now and then clumps of fir-trees (*A. grandis*) grow on these mounds: their graceful branches touch the ground, then the trees taper gradually to a sharp point, an appearance suggesting green sugar-loaves. Backing up the entire scene, though forty miles away, Mount Rainer stands massive and majestic. It seems to me, as I gaze on its glittering white mantle of perpetual snow, that I could stretch out my hand and touch it—and yet I know it is so very distant—it has no apparent summit (I do not know the altitude), vanishing in misty cloud, sky and mountain seem blended together into impenetrable obscurity.

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