

I need not refer particularly to the mountain chains which characterize this country—the Sierra Nevada of California, and the Cascade mountains of Oregon and Washington, stretching far to the northward: the Rocky Mountain chain, having a vast extension in the parallel of San Francisco and Washington city, and to the northward of the South Pass, and then greatly diminishing in breadth still further north, until it passes beyond the 49th parallel into the British possessions. Again, there are, intermediate between these two great chains, many subsidiary chains, branching off from the Sierra Nevada, the Cascades, and the Rocky mountains, which need not be more specifically referred to.

Another peculiarity of the country of the Missouri and the Columbia is, that on the eastern slope the prairie region extends to the very base of the Rocky mountains. On and northward of the railroad line, from Fort Union along the valley of Milk river to Fort Benton, there are no upheavals, with the single exception of the Three Buttes, which rise out of the prairie just under the 49th parallel, three thousand feet high, about 100 miles eastward of the Rocky mountains.

If you look to the Rocky Mountain region, between the 46th and 49th parallels, you will find that it is essentially a country of prairies. West of the Bitter Root chain of mountains, a great plain stretches to the Cascade mountains, on the west, and from the 48th to below the 46th parallel. This prairie region is, for the most part, well watered, well grassed, and furnishes a large portion of arable land.

One other feature remains to be considered in the geography of this country, and that is, the two great ports on this coast, San Francisco and Puget's sound. San Francisco is the great port of California, and must ever be a great key-point of business and commerce. But Puget's sound is admitted by all naval and military gentlemen