below Lake Ontario. It then follows the river and chain of lakes, Ontario, Erie, St. Clair, Huron, and Superior, proceeding from the last by the course of the river La Pluie, or Rainy River, to the Lake of the Woods, from which it passes along the 49th parallel to the Rocky Mountains.

On the west of the mountains, the Americans have an unquestioned claim to the country from the 42d to the 54th parallel. On the south, the United States are bounded by the Gulf of Mexico; and on the south-west, the boundary extends from the mouth of the river Sabine, in a north-west direction, to a point in the Rocky Mountains, in north latitude 42°, and west longitude 108°, from which it passes along the 42d parallel to the Pacific ocean.

Mountains. Two great chains of mountains traverse the territory of the United States, in a direction approaching to south and north; the Alleghany on the east, and the Rocky Mountains on the west. They divide the country into an eastern, a western, and a middle division, the latter comprising the great basin or valley of the Mississippi. For a particular description of the mountains, see the article Alleghany, &c.

Lakes and rivers. The two largest lakes wholly within the United States are Michigan and Champlain. Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, lie one half in this country, and one half in Upper Canada.

The United States contain many large and navigable rivers; some of the principal of which are the Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Potomac, James, Savannah, Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Red River, and the Oregon or Columbia.

A particular description of the lakes and rivers will be found under their respective heads.

Climate. The climate of the United States is remarkably inconstant and variable. It passes rapidly from the frosts of Norway to the scorching heats of Africa, and from the humidity of Holland to the drought of Castile. A change of 20 or 25 degrees of Fahrenheit, in one day, is not considered extraordinary. Even the Indians complain of the sudden variations of temperature. In sweeping over a vast frozen surface, the north-west wind acquires an extreme degree of cold and dryness, and operates very injuriously on the human frame. The south-east, on the other hand, produces on the Atlantic coast effects similar to those of the sirocco. The south-west has the same influence in the plains to the east of the Alleghanies: when it blows, the heat frequently becomes painful and suffocating. In the mountains, however, where the summer heat is moderate, even in the southern states, the fresh and blooming complexion of young persons, is a proof of the purity and salubrity of the atmosphere. The same ruddy complexion prevails in New England and in the interior of Pennsylvania; but the pale countenances of the inhabitants of all the low country, from New York to Florida, reminds a stranger of the Creoles in the West India Islands. In this region malignant fevers are prevalent in September and October. The countries situated to the west of the Alleghanies are in general more temperate and healthful. The south-west wind there brings rain, while the same effect is produced on the other side of the mountains by the north-east wind. But the north-east wind, which covers the Atlantic coast with thick fogs, is dry and elastic on the banks of the Ohio. When we compare the climate on the opposite sides of the Atlantic, we find that the extremes of temperature are greater, and that the winter's cold is more severe on the west side than on the east. The mean temperature of the year, according to Humboldt, is 9 degrees (Fahr.) lower at Philadelphia than in the corresponding latitudes on the coast of Europe. The mouth of the Delaware is generally shut by ice for six or eight weeks, and that of the St. Lawrence for five months in the year. Throughout the United States, the rains are sudden and heavy, and the dews extremely copious. Storms of thunder and lightning are also much more common and formidable than in Europe.