

range, which consists in great part of Devonian and Carboniferous limestones. A few Cretaceous basins, resembling in their character isolated features of the eastern foot-hills, are included in the southern part of the range. Some of the valleys penetrating the range on the east are lightly timbered or in part prairie-like in character; but, as a rule, these mountains are thickly wooded wherever sufficient soil exists for the support of trees, and, owing to the greater rainfall on the western slopes, the forests are there often very dense and additional species of trees are represented.

From the boundary line northward, the principal passes are as follows:—South Kootanie Pass, elevation, 7,100 feet; North Kootanie Pass, eastern or main summit, 6,750 feet; Western summit, 6,800 feet; Crow Nest Pass, summit, 5,500 feet; Kanaskis Pass, 5,700 feet; Bow River and Kicking Horse Pass, 5,300; Howse Pass, 5,210 feet; Athabasca Pass, elevation unknown; Yellow Head Pass, 3,733 feet; Smoky River Pass, — feet; Pine River Pass, 2,850 feet; Peace River Valley, 2,000 feet. With the exception of the route selected for the Canadian Pacific Railway, these passes are traversed only by rough mountain trails, practicable for pack animals.

The western edge of the Rocky Mountain range is defined by a very remarkable straight and wide valley, which can be traced uninterruptedly from the 49th parallel to the head waters of the Peace—a distance of 700 miles—and may eventually be found to extend much further. This valley is occupied by the upper portions of several of the largest rivers, the Kootanie, Columbia, Fraser, Parsnip and Findley.

The Gold Ranges, which name may be applied as a general one to the next mountain region, is composed of a number of more or less clearly defined subsidiary ranges, the Selkirk, Purcell, Columbia and Cariboo Mountains. Crystalline schists, including gneisses and traversed by intrusive granitic masses, enter largely into the composition of these mountains, and there is ground for the belief that this is geologically the oldest of the ranges of this part of the Cordillera. It is probable that many of its summits exceed 8,000 feet, but their outlines are generally more rounded and flowing than those of the Rocky Mountains, and owing to its dense and tangled forests it is extremely difficult to penetrate and has been less explored than the others. Its width may be stated as about eighty miles, but north of the Cariboo district, about the head waters of the Peace, it dies away completely, though probably again resuming in the Omineca district still further to the north-west.

Between this and the Coast Ranges, stretches a region which may be called the Interior Plateau of British Columbia, with an average