

Let us now see where Nevada is, and particularly that part which we intend to notice at some length. We will turn to the Map of the Western United States, and noticing where the 38th parallel of north latitude and 120th west longitude intersect, we have before our mind's eye the location of the Geysers of Nevada. We see that we are only a short distance off the eastern boundary of California, and not far from the southern line of Oregon. We see that this State is completely shut in, having no water communication with any other part. We note a total absence of all large rivers, and that such as there are, are seemingly lost in the interior. In other places the water flows from the country; but the interior of the State of Nevada is a huge basin to which the water gravitates from the edges. On every side it is surrounded by lofty and rugged mountains rising to the east, north and south from an elevated table land, and to the west we have the mighty Sierra Nevadas rising from a base nearly sea level, and attaining an elevation of from fourteen thousand to sixteen thousand feet. These latter are the chief source of water, and as they range north and south we can easily comprehend that the greater number of rivers must flow eastward. In other parts of the State we have water wherever the mountains are sufficiently high to retain the snow and rain, and acting as a careful steward, dole it out in the necessary quantities and extend the operation over the required number of months. This latter source of supply, as may well be believed, is a precarious one; but the snows of the Sierras never fail. The next enquiry will naturally be, what becomes of all this water? None of these rivers are available as a means of communication, though there is abundance of water during the short rainy season. During this time the quantity which finds its level in the interior is immense, and we may well be pardoned if we are puzzled to account for its disappearance. It forms great lakes, which gradually disappear, partly by evaporation; but the greater part must sink through the sand, leaving in the centre a large quagmire or morass as a proof of its existence. Long before the annual fall, many of the lakes have totally disappeared, and we find large quantities of salt—in many instances pure—on their site. We may instance the cases of the Humboldt and Carson. The former rises in the Rocky Mountains, and after a course of between three and four hundred miles sinks in the heart of Nevada. In many places it is from two to three hundred yards wide, and not