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THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION OF WYOMING AND IDAHO.
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IN the present dearth of new ascents and new fields of Alpine exploration in Europe, a short sketch of a mountain region little known, and hitherto visited only by a few exploring expeditions and trappers, may not be without interest to the Alpine Club. Although the mountains of Wyoming and Idaho are generally inferior in elevation to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado further south, yet the much greater scale of the ancient glacial phenomena in these more northern ranges, and the actual presence of a few small glaciers, until last year undiscovered in the great central chain of America, render this section of the utmost interest to the glacialist and Alpine traveller.

When at Washington in the spring of last year, Dr. Hayden, the energetic director of the survey of the Territories, learning my intention of visiting the Geysir basins and Yellowstone region during my travels, most hospitably suggested that I should join one of his parties in the following July, and visit the Wind River mountains and the range of the Tetons *en route*. I accepted this kind offer with alacrity, for not only was the route new, but there was also an additional inducement in the fact that Mr. A. D. Wilson, who is in charge of the primary triangulation of the survey, was to be of the party, and his work would necessitate the ascent of some of the higher peaks. I had heard much of the highest peak of the Teton range, and its reputation as one of the most difficult mountains in the United States did not lessen my desire to attempt its ascent.

The interval from April to July I passed in Colorado and Utah; but the season was too early for much travelling among the mountains. An attempt to push as far as the Elk mountains failed in consequence of the impossibility of getting my

mules over the great accumulations of snow on the passes near the head of the Arkansas river; and the swollen state of the rivers also caused us much obstruction.

In the middle of July I returned to Cheyenne on the Union Pacific Railway, the rendezvous and outfitting depôt of Hayden's parties. They arrived on the 19th, and five days were spent in the necessary preparations. On the 23rd the packers, mules, and provisions were despatched by train to their respective points of departure on the railroad, and on the 24th the various members of the surveying parties followed, arriving on the morning of the 25th at Point of Rocks station. Here Dr. Hayden, Messrs. Wilson, Holmes (geologist), and Jackson (photographer to the survey), together with my own party, disembarked, leaving another party under the direction of Mr. H. Gannett and Dr. Peale to continue by rail as far as Green River station, from which point they would proceed in a direction roughly parallel with our own, and ultimately join with us in the Yellowstone district. My own party, besides myself, consisted of Michel Payot of Chamonix, a packer, and a cook.

Our course lay approximately north, over a portion of the Green River basin towards a prominent gap near the southeastern extremity of the Wind River range. Our first camp after quitting the railroad was near a series of interesting little ancient volcanoes, probably of post-Tertiary age, which rise from 600 to 1,000 feet above the general level. A considerable part of the Green River basin consists of the 'bad lands,' the 'mauvaises terres,' of the Canadian travellers—and over these we travelled for five days, including a halt of the greater part of a day for observations on the solar eclipse of July 29th. These 'bad lands,' although of great interest to the geologist, are not pleasant to travel over. The most characteristic formation is one of variegated sandstones, shales, and marls, the layers of which being generally horizontal, or nearly so, are sculptured by the weather into all sorts of fantastic architectural forms. Water and grass are scarce, and the former often bad, and strongly alkaline. There are no trees except a few dwarfed cottonwood trees or aspens near the rare springs; but sage brush (*Artemisia tridentata*) is often of dense growth, and the ground on which this shrub occurs is often coated with a white alkaline incrustation which, if there is any wind, is disagreeable to eyes, nose, and lips. In July the nights are cold, much colder than at considerably greater altitudes in the mountainous districts. The general elevation of this basin above sea-level ranges from 6,200 to 7,300 feet.

On the evening of July 30 we camped about 15 miles from the gap above mentioned. Here it is necessary to remark upon the topography of this region. Roughly speaking, the head of the basin of the Green River, the principal stream of the great Colorado River, is enclosed by two chains of mountains, the Wind River and Wyoming ranges, which converge towards the north; the first mentioned and more important extending about 70 miles in a north-west and south-east direction; the latter, on the western flank of the basin, running nearly north and south; but although the Wyoming range is a well marked chain of mountains, none of its peaks attain to any considerable altitude. Both these chains are connected with each other near their northern extremities by the smaller transverse range of the Grosventre mountains. To the north of the Grosventre mountains is the Snake River, the southern branch of the Columbia. This river, rising in the Shoshone lake, flows along the eastern base of the Teton range, the direction of which nearly coincides with the line of continuation to the north of the Wyoming range, and on arriving at a depression separating the Wyoming and Teton mountains breaks through it to the west in a deep and long cañon.

Our camp of the 30th was near the south-east end of the Wind River mountains, and on the evening of that day we had quitted the Tertiary formations of the Green River basin, and were now camped on a low, extensive, but irregular, sort of granite plateau, which bordered the whole south-western flank of the range, increasing considerably in elevation towards the north-west. Near our camp it sloped almost down to the level of the plain, and stretched out further from the base of the mountains than in other localities. Our altitude was here, judging from previous and subsequent observations, about 7,200 feet. The appearance of the south-east end of the range was not imposing; but the higher peaks were masked. The next day we started at 7.45 A.M., and after riding three hours across the plateau formed our main camp, whence, after leaving tents and heavier baggage, about half of the party started at 12.30, with three days' provisions, for the ascent of Wind River Peak, the highest of this portion of the chain. The scene now changed rapidly. In less than an hour we crossed the headwaters of the Sweetwater, and mounted the sides of a large moraine overgrown with dense timber, through which we passed along an Indian trail. The moraine filled the lower part of the valley, descending from the gap in the range, and on its irregular, forest-covered surface the depressions were occupied by beautiful little lakes, some of which were nearly covered with

water-lilies. The col was reached about 5 p.m., and found to be about 10,500 ft. above sea level. Descending on the east side of the watershed towards the Wind River valley, in less than an hour we turned up a creek which enters the main stream from the north, and at 6.30 reached a shallow lake in a large rocky basin, near which we camped. We suffered much from the mosquitos, which were here unusually numerous and active. Whether their untiring pertinacity was due to change of diet from the thick-skinned red man to the more thin-skinned white, I cannot assert with scientific accuracy; but I was rather surprised at the time to find that nether garments, unless of close texture, are little protection against their attacks.

On August 1 we started from camp at 6.20 A.M. to ascend Wind River Peak, Hayden, Wilson and Holmes on mules, Michel and I on foot. For the first half hour we passed through pine woods; then coming in view of the peak, the route was obvious, and we arrived at the summit about 9 A.M., the mules having been picketed about 1,500 feet below. The ascent was ridiculously easy for a mountain of 13,400 feet, so much so that I was totally unprepared for the sudden descent on the east side of the mountain, which was so sheer and unexpected as to be positively startling. From the top we immediately perceived a glacier at the base of the north-east precipice about 1,700 feet below us. My companions had at first some doubts as to its being a true glacier, so while they were engaged on the summit I descended with Michel on to its surface. It was, indeed, of very small size, but there could be no doubt as to its genuine character. It headed in a depression a little north of the peak; was about three-quarters of a mile long, and 800 yards broad in its widest part, and its general direction was east-north-east. The cliffs on its northern side, forming an irregular spur from the main peak, were of excessive steepness, and were grooved and polished almost to the top of the spur.

Instead of rejoining our companions, Michel and I struck out a different route towards camp, passing over an intermediate summit in the hope of finding mountain sheep, and fell in with the main party on their return in the afternoon. The same evening, on ascending a hill near camp and about 1,000 feet above it, I found the top covered with striæ and grooves running in the direction of the lateral valley, viz., nearly north and south. It was clear that the glaciers on this side of the watershed had been of much greater extent than on the southwestern side; and I had a strong suspicion, which I had not time to verify, that the glaciers on this north-east side of the

range, being piled up to a higher level than the col over which we had passed, for a time overflowed through it to the west. This would be a precisely similar case to that of the ancient Ober-Aar Glacier, when it passed over the watershed above the Grimsel, and overflowed into the Rhone Valley.

The next morning early, while the remainder of the party returned to the main camp of July 31, I accompanied Messrs. Wilson and Jackson a little distance up the lateral valley, and then mounted up to a beautifully situated lake basin encircled by steep cliffs, where a few hours were spent in photographing. We then returned across the watershed to our camp on the west of the range.

The next day, August 3, we broke camp. Our next object of attack was Fremont's Peak, reputedly the highest of the Wind River mountains and about forty miles further north-west. Not being able to continue along the granite plateau, which was too much broken up to allow the passage of a pack train, we made a detour nearly west, descending along the edge of the Green River plain, and camped that evening on the banks of the Big Sandy River, a tributary of the Green River. The following day we reached another tributary, one of the several so-called New Forks. We were now close to the edge of the granite plateau, and this day we had passed several masses of morainal detritus which had been brought down from the plateau on to the plain. In the evening we ascended a granite hill or 'butte,' west of camp, a kind of outlier of the plateau, from which we had a good view of the range, which in this region is much more rugged and picturesque than near its south-eastern extremity. Fremont's Peak was yet about thirty miles distant, and its appearance from here gave promise of a stiff climb.

On the morning of the 5th we pursued our journey, and in 3 hours arrived at the foot of a considerable moraine. We ascended this, and found that we had struck a series of large concentric terminal moraines, one within the other, inside which was enclosed a beautiful irregular lake about five miles long. Except at its eastern end nearer the mountains, it was entirely surrounded by moraines, and on its sides they rose upwards of 1,000 feet above its level. It was by far the most perfect and striking instance of a lake formed in this manner that I had ever seen. A glacier at least fifteen miles long had stretched from the central chain across the granite plateau, and had then descended into the plain; and on its retreat the lake had been formed from its melting within the moraines which it had accumulated.

But a more wonderful exhibition of old glaciation was still in store. After riding two hours further in a north-westerly direction over numerous moraine heaps, we came to a long granite hill rising about 1,200 feet above the plain and trending in a direction parallel with the range. On ascending it, we found it to be directly opposite to a considerable wide depression in the granite plateau, which extended beyond to the axis of the Wind River chain. This depression had formerly been filled up by a large glacier, which descending in a long ice fall from the plateau, had scooped out a deep rock basin, now occupied by a lake, between the plateau and the hill on which we stood. Its straight course then being obstructed by the hill directly in front, the glacier split into two branches, corresponding with the two arms of the present lake, and leaving a large moraine on the weather side of the hill, swept round the flanks of the latter into the plain beyond, where its fan-shaped extremities nearly united at a distance of about twenty miles from its head. From our point of view the terminal moraines on the plain resembled great lava flows; and one of the lateral moraines below the granite plateau was fully 1,200 feet above the lake. Never had I seen the records of ancient glaciers written in such distinct characters. In the Alps the old glaciers were immensely greater, but their remains are but fragmentary. Rain and torrents have done their work of obliteration. Here, on the contrary, owing to subsequent slight rain-fall, the forms of the moraines are almost as marked and undisturbed as if they had been deposited only a century or two ago. Ice alone is needed to restore the picture.

From the north end of the hill we came in sight of another lake seven or eight miles long, and of considerable width, issuing from a deep cleft in the range, and similarly enclosed by a series of great lateral and terminal moraines one within another. We made towards this lake, and at its western extremity came up with our pack train about 7 P.M., and found it encamped. The situation was charming, and as this appeared to be a good place for a start for Fremont's Peak, it was decided to fix our main camp here for several days.

On August 6, leaving behind tents and superfluous baggage, we partly retraced our steps of the day before and followed the southern lateral moraine of the lake until we arrived at the steep slope at the edge of the plateau. This we found easy travelling at first, open glades alternating with patches of forest; but the ground soon became more broken and craggy, until at last we were brought to a halt near a small rock-bound lake about two miles long, round either side of which it

was impossible to proceed with animals; here we camped at a height of about 10,000 feet. We were about five miles in direct line from Fremont's Peak and had a good view of the upper face of the mountain. It appeared to be very precipitous, and during our ride some doubts had been expressed as to our success, but a steep spur abutting against the face now seemed to promise a practicable route. It would have been difficult to choose a more picturesque site for camp. We were at one end of a considerable depression, the view on all sides except that in the direction of a part of the main range being shut out by more or less rounded hills rising not more than 1,000 or 1,200 feet above us; but the view of the main peak and a few adjacent summits was set off finely by the lake in the foreground and its rocky sides.

Next morning, after an early breakfast, we started at 4.35. The route was over the rounded granite bosses on the south-east side of the lake, and these were occasionally so smooth and steep as to necessitate a good deal of scrambling. Wilson, who is a capital mountaineer, led the way at a pace which, just after an imprudently profuse breakfast, was decidedly embarrassing. Acting on the principle of 'assume a virtue though you have it not,' I struggled on in dignified if uncomfortable silence, but Michel's remonstrances if not generally intelligible were certainly sufficiently audible. On reaching the further end of the lake we struck off nearly east until our direct course was stopped by another lake lying almost at right angles to the last. We rounded the southern end of this lake in about 2½ hours from the start, and after keeping a short time along its eastern bank turned off sharp towards the extremity of the long spur running south-west from the face of Fremont's Peak which we had observed the day before. Keeping on the south of this we entered a large amphitheatre with two small lakes surrounded by four peaks, that most to the north being Fremont's Peak, and from one of them a small glacier descended towards the hollow. At 8.50 we reached the point where the spur abuts against the west face of the peak, and after a rough but easy climb gained the summit shortly after 10 o'clock.

On the eastern side of the mountain two fair-sized glaciers, whose lower ends were not visible, descend towards the Wind River plain. We found no record or trace of any previous ascent. Indeed it was supposed that the point which Fremont had ascended in 1842 was a lower summit some distance to the south, but his description of the latter part of the ascent agrees to a great extent with our experience, and the great snowfield seen by him on the other side may be identical with

the glacier which we saw. However this may be, I cannot understand the extreme difficulties which he experienced in the ascent, even though his route to the base of the peak lay more to the south than ours, his starting base being the first lake we saw on August 5.

The distant view from the summit was rather disappointing. Far south only slight indications of the Uintah range could be made out owing to the distant haze. The same cause prevented the Big Horn Mountains to the east from being visible; but the Tetons to the north-west were well seen overtopping everything in that quarter. In the immediate neighbourhood a peak about four miles north-west appeared to be 30 or 40 feet higher than our own, the elevation of which was 13,700 feet. In addition to the two glaciers abovementioned, which are the largest we saw, minor glaciers are not uncommon; and this range, with the Tetons and possibly some corners of the Big Horn Mountains, are the last refuges for expiring glaciers in the Central Rocky Mountain system of the United States. In a short time they will have abandoned even these remote recesses.

After staying nearly three hours on the summit, we returned to camp by a slight variation on our morning's route, Michel and I arriving late in camp in consequence of having had a long search for a rifle which he had left behind during the ascent. The next morning was occupied in photographing from a point about 1,000 feet above the lake, and in the afternoon we returned to the main camp of the 5th on the big lake. The next day was spent in hunting in the neighbourhood, and on August 10 we quitted the lake and the Wind River Mountains and travelled north-west over the plain. We crossed the Green River in the evening and camped on its bank, between twenty and thirty miles below its source at the north-west end of the Wind River Mountains. The next morning we continued in the direction of the Grosventre Mountains, and in a few hours arrived at a low irregular watershed (7,800 feet) which divides the drainage of the Green River and Snake River systems. Curiously enough the Grosventre Mountains do not form the watershed here, but the streams running into the Snake from the south actually head on the south side of the Grosventre range and cut their course through it. On one of these streams, Hoback's River, we camped that evening after a long ride, and on the 12th, still following the course of the creek, we entered a cañon in the Grosventre Mountains. For some time the route, which was along an old Indian trail, was easy, and we had ample leisure to admire the

beautiful scenery of the cañon; but when the trail mounted the sides of the river we had enough to do to look after our animals. The footing was treacherous in places, and at one particularly nasty spot one of my pack mules slipped and rolled over into the river 150 feet below. Beyond superficial cuts he was none the worse, and after disengaging himself from his load, containing my blankets and baggage, he left it to soak in mid-stream, and quietly walked off to the other side to graze. We camped about 5 P.M. in a deep hollow, being doubtful about finding good pasture further on. We reckoned we were now only a few miles from the junction of our stream with the Snake, and it had been arranged that on arriving at this river we were to split into two parties.

Hayden, Holmes and Jackson were to proceed due north along the east side of the Teton range, while Wilson and my party were to cross the Snake above the junction of Hoback's River, and after making a considerable detour round the south end of the range, attack the chief summit from the west; then after following the course of the Henry's Fork of the Snake and arriving at Henry's Lake, we were to strike east and join Dr. Hayden's party again in ten days or a fortnight in the Upper or Lower Geysir basin. Unfortunately this arrangement was upset as far as concerned myself by an unforeseen contretemps. On collecting the mules on the morning of the 13th, two of my pack mules were missing. These animals have an annoying habit of straying during night towards their previous camp, but on this occasion from the position of our present camp and the difficulty of the trail passed over on the previous day, this explanation of their absence was thought highly improbable. Their speedy recovery was considered so certain that Hayden's and Wilson's parties started about ten o'clock, leaving me to follow; but, at the last moment, thinking that the mules might possibly have gone back on the trail, I told Wilson that if I could not get as far as the ford of the Snake that evening I should not attempt to follow him, but keep straight up the river and endeavour to overtake Hayden's party. I knew that Wilson had no time to spare, and did not consider I should be justified in causing any delay in his work; and my pack mules, not being so good as his, were not equal to a forced march after him. About noon their tracks were found on the back trail some miles from camp, but the search was unsuccessful, and my men returned near midnight to camp. They started again early next morning with fresh animals and a day's provisions. Night came and passed but neither men nor animals turned up, and as I had told the men that in case

they could not recover the mules that day I should go on without further search, I began to have serious fear that they had fallen in with hostile Indians. Next morning I set off early on foot along the trail, leaving Michel to look after the remaining animals, and towards noon was delighted to see men and mules appear in the distance. The men had gone back as far as the Green River, our camp of the 10th, having found occasional tracks, but no animals, and after a fatiguing day's work halted about 11 P.M., when after supper the missing mules walked right up to their fire. The condition of the mules on their return to camp was such that further advance that day was out of the question. Besides, I had no fear of not being able to overtake Dr. Hayden's party somewhere near Jackson's Lake, east of the Tetons, where they had several days' work, with which the cloudy weather of the last two days would have interfered. Towards evening Steve Hovey, Hayden's head packer, rode into camp. Finding that we had not been at the ford where he had left a note for me, Dr. Hayden had become apprehensive and sent Hovey to bring him news of us. We started next day, August 16, at 8 A.M. and camped on the Snake River considerably above the ford. The scenery of this valley is so fine that I almost forgot my disappointment at not being able to join Wilson's party. The only drawback to the traveller is that this district is a great summer resort for the Shoshone Indians, and although they are generally friendly, travelling is not quite safe for a very small party. At this time, owing to the Bannack war, the valley was deserted, and we did not see a single Indian between the Green River and the Yellowstone. The Snake, above the cañon, is a stately deep-flowing river between moderately high banks, and about 80 yards wide. Trout are generally abundant and of large size. Grasshoppers are invariably the best bait.

The weather, which had been threatening for some days, now broke, and it rained heavily all night, and in the morning the clouds were low down on the Teton mountains. We started early on the 17th, and came up with Hayden's party early in the afternoon. The clouds lifted later, and from a hill east of camp we got a magnificent view of the southern part of the Teton range. Although not so high as many of the Colorado mountains, they are far more impressive and picturesque, rising immediately from the valley to a height of more than 7,000 ft. above the river, the height of the Grand Teton being 13,691 ft. On the other side of the river, and at the base of the mountains was a dense belt of timber, but this obstacle once passed,

there appeared to be no great difficulty in reaching a well-marked col south of the main peak. It was Wilson's intention to reach this col from the west, and then work partly along the face of the mountain, and try to gain the summit by the southern arête. But our limited time, and the uncertainty of the weather, prevented us from making the attempt. We were due in the Yellowstone region in a few days; provisions also were running low, and game was very scarce, and we could not reckon on getting our fresh supplies for ten days.

On the 18th we crossed the Snake river and moved our camp about eight miles further north, intending to devote the afternoon to photography, but bad weather interfered with our operations. We were more successful next morning, and started again about noon, intending to recross the Snake near its exit from Jackson's lake. After passing over several well-marked old river-terraces, we got entangled in the forest near the south end of the lake, and not being able to force our way through, were obliged to retrace our steps and then make west towards the junction of the Buffalo Fork with the Snake. Unable to find a ford, we camped on the west bank of the river near some low hills, and the next morning Hayden, Jackson, and myself ascended one of these, and were rewarded by a magnificent view of the Teton range, the lake, and the whole of the Snake valley above the cañon. The most prominent object was the square-topped Mount Moran, one of the more northern peaks of these mountains, right opposite to us, beautifully reflected in the still waters of Jackson's Lake. The southern and western banks of the latter, as well as the lower slopes of the mountains beyond, were clothed with dense forest, much of it burned and fallen, and evil to ride through. To the north, on the other side of the Snake River above the lake, the mountains fell off gradually in height until finally they merged into an immense undulating plateau covered by apparently unbroken forest, which bounded the horizon. From this elevated plateau descended the Lewis's fork, or chief branch of the Snake River, heading in the Shoshone and Lewis Lakes, and running into Jackson's Lake, from which it issued a few miles from our position.

A few very small glaciers still exist on the eastern slopes of the Teton range, and I have no doubt that these were once developed on an immensely greater scale, and probably filled up the depression occupied by Jackson's Lake. To this circumstance may probably be due the diversion of the original direct course of the river, of which there is ample evidence in the old deserted river-channels and terraces, into its present tortuous and apparently unnatural channel.

After Jackson had obtained some excellent negatives, we reluctantly turned our backs on the marvellous scene. On our return to camp we found all ready for a start. Turning south-east, we found a ford across the Snake above its junction with the Buffalo fork, early in the afternoon, and camped that evening near the marshy flats on the east of Jackson's Lake. The next day we continued our journey up the river, and on the 22nd entered the forest-covered plateau, camping that night near the source of the Snake, a few miles below Lewis's Lake. We had now entered the Yellowstone region, not a day too soon, for our provisions were nearly giving out. Only about two days' full rations remained, and for four days we had seen no game. It would yet be three days before we could reach the Lower Geysir basin, and our fresh supplies would probably not arrive there for a week. That night, to make matters worse, an evil-disposed mule came into camp and ate up all that was left of Hayden's supply of flour. Next morning our breakfast, though very light, was not a cheerful meal, and the heavy-falling rain had no tendency to raise our spirits. We had a very hard day through dense forest, and it was not easy when there was no sun to keep a straight course. At one time during the day we had a momentary gleam of hope. We came all at once upon fresh mule-tracks crossing our route, and immediately jumped to the conclusion that Gannett's party must have passed by that day. We followed them a short distance and found, alas! that they were our own tracks upon which we had unwittingly doubled. At last we struck the south shore of the Shoshone Lake, and skirting this reached the Little Geysir basin at its western end. The animals were knocked up, and we were hungry; and as we rode slowly along I was anxiously seeking a solution of the problem before us—to satisfy a large appetite with slender materials. All at once mules were discovered grazing—a few seconds more, and tents came into view. We had come across Gannett's party, and that night we supped 'not wisely but too well.'

A few days later we were camped in the Upper Geysir basin on the Madison River. On August 28 Michel and I were out hunting, when at some distance we saw two men on foot coming along the river bank in the direction of our camp. We approached them, and found them to be Wilson and his hunter, Harry Yount. After the first salutations, Wilson told us that three days before they had been surprised at night, when camped on the Henry's fork, by a band of Bannack Indians, their camp fired into, their animals all captured, and,

resistance being useless in the face of heavy odds, themselves compelled to take refuge in the forest. These Indians, it appeared afterwards, were retreating from the United States troops further west, and Wilson had camped near them, entirely unaware of their unpleasant proximity. He had been obliged to cross through the forest on foot as quickly as possible to the Lower Geysir basin, where he left three of his party quite knocked up, and had pushed on up the Madison hoping to find one or both of the other parties. He brought the pleasing intelligence that the Indians were making in our direction. Fortunately we saw nothing of them, but our provision-train, which arrived the day but one after, narrowly escaped them. Wilson had fortunately got his instruments out of camp after the first attack and hid them, and on his return a few days afterwards they were recovered. The camp, however, had been thoroughly sacked.

Wilson's attempt on the Grand Teton had not been successful. He had been detained by bad weather, during which he could make no observations, and ultimately was unable to reach the actual summit, being stopped about 150 ft. below by a face of rock which he could neither get over nor turn.

Here my narrative must end. I do not propose to give a description of the Yellowstone region, the mountains of which yield in point of interest to its other wonders. The publications of the Hayden Survey have treated at length on the numerous features of general and special interest, and to these I can add nothing.

Reference has already been made to the general inferiority in elevation of the mountains of the district described to those of Colorado. Peaks of 14,000 ft. elevation and upwards are of frequent occurrence in the latter-mentioned State, whereas in Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana not one attains this altitude. But it must not be supposed from this fact that the Colorado Mountains are superior either in form or in difficulty. It is not very uncommon to be able to ride up to within 1,200 or 1,500 ft. from the summit of the higher peaks, and it is even possible in a very few cases to reach the summit in this manner.

As a general rule, to which there are not many exceptions, when the timber-line, which varies from about 11,000 ft. in Colorado to 10,000 ft. in Idaho, has been passed, the mountains of the great central chain of North America are singularly easy of ascent, and the traveller in the United States, to whom mountain difficulty is a necessity, must turn his attention to the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade Range.