

with more light and increased interest on the homeward journey. At last, on the far western horizon the first summits of the Rocky Mountains rose like blue islets out of the sea. Hour after hour, as the train ground its dusty way over the plain, these islets rose higher, till at last they united into the long noble range of the snow-streaked Colorado Alps, with Pike's Peak, Long's Peak, and a host of other broad-based cones towering far up into the clear air.

Though it was no part of our programme to linger among these mountains, we gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity of making an excursion into them in passing. The first few hours showed us on what a different plan these mountains had been constructed from that which is more familiar in the Old World. Approaching the Alps, for instance, you cross a succession of parallel minor ranges, or foot-hills, like the Jura, which flank the more colossal ramparts behind them. But these Colorado Mountains tower straight out of the plain. For hundreds of miles to the east the Cretaceous or Tertiary strata underlying the prairie seem to be nearly flat or only very slightly undulating, though there is a steady rise of the ground westward. But at the foot of the mountains they are at once abruptly pitched up on end. So sharp and sudden is the bend that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that you might sit on the flat beds and lean your back on the vertical ones. From some points of view the solid sheets of rock made a magnificent curve from the plains up into the line of serrated crags which their broken edges present against the sky. The meaning of this structure is soon apparent when the traveller ascends one of the numerous deep gorges or cañons into which the flanks of the mountains have been trenched by the erosion of the escaping drainage. In the course of a brief space he finds that he has crossed the