

the mountain regions than by any special altitude. The surface is usually undulating, and often hilly. The great interior region of the North American continent, including the Mississippi valley, is an example of an *interior* plain; also the plains of the Amazon; the pampas of La Plata; the lower lands of Europe and Asia. Frequently the surface rises gradually into the bordering mountain-declivities, as in the case of the Mississippi plains and the Rocky Mountain slope. Broad, low plains between mountain ranges and the seashore are called *coastal* plains. Along the eastern border of North America from New Jersey southward, the coastal plains are broad and have navigable streams. Next west is a region of more uneven and rocky country with rapid streams — the *Piedmont* region, which extends to the Appalachian region, or that of the mountains.

A *mountain* is either a single peak, as Mount Etna, Mount Washington, Mount Blanc; or a ridge; or a series of ridges, sometimes grouped in many, more or less parallel, lines.

A *mountain range* consists of a series of ridges closely related in position, direction, and origin: as in the Appalachian ranges, the Wasatch, the Sierra Nevada. A *sierra* is, in Spanish, the name of a ridge, or group of ridges, of serrated or irregular outline.

A *mountain system* consists of two or more mountain ranges, of the same period of origin, belonging to a common region of elevation, and generally either parallel or in consecutive lines, or consecutive curves, with often inferior transverse lines of heights. A *mountain chain* consists of two or more mountain-systems of different periods of origin, in the same part of a continent. The oldest of the mountain ranges in a chain is called the *protaxis* — so named from the Greek for *first* and *axis* (see the map of the Archæan areas on page 443). The other ranges are usually parallel to the protaxis, and may, or may not, have greater height. The Appalachian Chain extends from Canada to Alabama, and comprises (1) the protaxis, represented by the Highlands of New Jersey and Putnam County, New York, and their continuation northward interruptedly along the eastern half of the Green Mountains into Canada, and southward, as a narrow, interrupted area, through Pennsylvania, and a very broad area through Virginia, to Georgia; (2) the Taconic Range, along the borders of New England and New York to New Jersey and beyond; and (3) the Appalachian Range.

The Rocky Mountains also have a protaxis, with approximately parallel ranges of later formation. This protaxis is the "Front Range" in Colorado, nearly 1000 miles from the Pacific coast, making the Pacific border region in this part very wide. But to the north, in Montana and Wyoming, the protaxis makes a westward bend of 250 miles, and then resumes a north-westward course and continues to the parallel of $52\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, and is represented beyond this in isolated ridges; consequently the Pacific border region of British America is relatively narrow. The line to the north of the United States appears to be represented to the south in the Archæan axis of the Wasatch and some other similar ridges. The very large area of the Pacific