personal ends to serve, and gained for himself nothing more solid than notoriety. His agitation was essentially the same as that which has appeared in the Western States under the forms of Grangerism, the Farmers' Alliance, and Populism, an effort to apply political remedies to evils, real or supposed, which are mainly economic rather than political, and only a part of which legislation can remove. Similar movements must from time to time be expected; all that can be hoped is to keep them within constitutional lines, and prevent them from damaging the credit and retarding the prosperity of the States they affect. Nothing is more natural than that those who suffer from hard times and see that a few men grow rich while the vast majority remain poor should confound the mischiefs which arise from State or city maladministration and from the undue power which the laws have permitted corporations to acquire with other hardships due to the constitution of human nature and the conditions of the world we live in, and should, possessing the whole power of the State, strike out wildly at all three at once. In a country so little restrained by ancient traditions or deference to the educated class as is Western America, a country where the aptitude for politics is so much in advance of economic wisdom, it is less surprising that these storms should sometimes darken the sky than that they should uproot so little in their course.

CHAPTER XCI

THE HOME OF THE NATION

There are three points wherein the territories which constitute the United States present phenomena new in the annals of the world. They contain a huge people whose blood is becoming mixed in an unprecedented degree by the concurrent immigration of numerous European races. We find in them, beside the predominant white nation, seven millions of men belonging to a dark race, thousands of years behind in its intellectual development, but legally equal in political and civil rights. And thirdly, they furnish an instance to which no parallel can be found of a vast area, including regions very dissimilar in their natural features, occupied by a population nearly the whole of which speaks the same tongue, and all of which lives under the same institutions. Of these phenomena the first has been already frequently referred to, while the second is dealt with in a later chapter. The third suggests to us thoughts and questions which cannot pass unnoticed. No one can travel in the United States without asking himself whether this immense territory will remain united or be split up into a number of independent communities; whether, even if it remain united, diverse types of life and character will spring up within it; whether and how far climatic and industrial conditions will affect those types, carrying them farther from the prototypes of Europe. These questions, as well as other questions regarding the future local distribution of wealth and population, open fields of inquiry and speculation too wide to be here explored. Yet some pages may well be given to a rapid survey of the geographical conditions of the United States, and of the influence those conditions have exerted and may, so far as can be foreseen, continue to exert on the growth of the nation, its political and economical development. Beginning with a few observa-

tions first on the orography of the country and then upon its meteorology, we may consider how mountain ranges and climate have hitherto affected the movement of colonization and the main stream of political history. The chief natural sources of wealth may next be mentioned, and their possible effect indicated upon the development of population in particular areas, as well as upon the preservation of the permanent unity of the Republic.

One preliminary remark must not be omitted. The relation of geographical conditions to national growth changes, and with the upward progress of humanity the ways in which Nature moulds the fortunes of man are always varying. Man must in every stage be for many purposes dependent upon the circumstances of his physical environment. Yet the character of that dependence changes with his advance in civilization. At first he is helpless, and, therefore, passive. With what Nature gives in the way of food, clothing, and lodging he must be content. She is strong, he is weak: so she dictates his whole mode of life. Presently, always by slow degrees, but most quickly in those countries where she neither gives lavishly nor yet presses on him with a discouraging severity, he begins to learn how to make her obey him, drawing from her stores materials which his skill handles in such wise as to make him more and more independent of her. He defies the rigours of climate; he overcomes the obstacles which mountains, rivers, and forests place in the way of communications; he discovers the secrets of the physical forces and makes them his servants in the work of production. But the very multiplication of the means at his disposal for profiting by what Nature supplies brings him into ever closer and more complex relations with her. The variety of her resources, differing in different regions, prescribes the kind of industry for which each spot is fitted; and the competition of nations, growing always keener, forces each to maintain itself in the struggle by using to the utmost every facility for production or for the transportation of products. Thus certain physical conditions, whether of soil or of climate, of accessibility or inaccessibility, or perhaps of such available natural forces as water-power, conditions of supreme importance in the earlier stages of man's progress, are now of less relative moment, while others, formerly of small

account, have received their full significance by our swiftly advancing knowledge of the secrets of Nature and mastery of her forces. It is this which makes the examination of the influence of physical environment on the progress of nations so intricate a matter; for while the environment remains, as a whole, constant, its several parts vary in their importance from one age to another.[1] A certain severity of climate, for instance, which retarded the progress of savage man, has been found helpful to semi-civilized man, in stimulating him to exertion, and in maintaining a racial vigour greater than that of the inhabitants of those hotter regions where civilization first arose. And thus in considering how man's lot and fate in the Western Continent have been affected by the circumstances of that continent, we must have regard not only to what he found on his arrival there, but to the resources which have been subsequently disclosed. Nor can this latter head be exhausted, because it is impossible to conjecture what still latent forces or capacities may be revealed in the onward march of science, and how such a revelation may affect the value of the resources now known to exist or hereafter to be explored.

It is only on a very few salient points of this large and complex subject that I shall touch in sketching the outlines of North American geography and noting some of the effects on the growth of the nation attributable to them.

The territory of the United States extends nearly 3000 miles east and west from the Bay of Fundy to the mouth of the Columbia River, and 1400 miles north and south from the Lake of the Woods to the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston. Compared with Europe, the physical structure of this area of 3,025,000 square miles[2] (excluding Alaska) is not only larger in scale, but far

[1] Navigable rivers, for instance, were at one time the main channels of commerce, so that towns were founded and prospered in respect of the advantages they gave. The extension of railways diminished their importance, and many great cities now owe their growth to their having become centres where trunk lines meet. Should a means be discovered of cheaply obtaining and transmitting electric force drawn from flowing water, rivers may regain their commercial value.

[2] The area of China, the country with which the United States is most fit to be compared, since India and the Russian Empire are inhabited by many diverse races, speaking wholly diverse tongues, is estimated at 1,336,000 square miles; and the population, the estimates of which range from 280,000,000 to 350,000,000, may possibly be, in A.D. 2000, equalled by that of the United States.

simpler. Instead of the numerous peninsulas and islands of Europe, with the bold and lofty chains dividing its peoples from one another, we find no isles (except Long Island) of any size on the two coasts of the United States, only one large peninsula (that of Florida), and only two mountain systems. Not only the lakes and rivers, but the plains also, and the mountain ranges, are of enormous dimensions. The coast presents a smooth outline. No great inlets, such as the Mediterranean and the Baltic, pierce the land and cut off one district from another, furnishing natural boundaries behind which distinct nations may grow up.

This vast area may be divided into four regions — two of level country, two, speaking roughly, of mountain. Beginning from the Atlantic, we find a strip which on the coast is nearly level, and then rises gradually westwards into an undulating country. It varies in breadth from thirty or forty miles in the north to two hundred and fifty in the south, and has been called by geographers the Atlantic Plain and Slope. Behind this strip comes a range, or rather a mass of generally parallel ranges, of mountains. These are the Alleghanies, or so-called "Appalachian system," in breadth from one hundred to two hundred miles, and with an average elevation of from two to four thousand feet, some few summits reaching six thousand. Beyond them, still further to the west, lies the vast basin of the Mississippi and its tributaries, 1100 miles wide and 1200 miles long. Its central part is an almost unbroken plain for hundreds of miles on each side the river, but this plain rises slowly westward in rolling undulations into a sort of plateau, which, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, has attained the height of 5000 feet above the sea. The fourth region consists of the thousand miles that lie between the Mississippi basin and the Pacific. It includes three not entirely disconnected mountain ranges, the Rockies, the Sierra Nevada (continued northwards in the Cascade Range), and the much lower and narrower Coast Range, which runs along the shore of the ocean. This region is generally mountainous, though within it there are some extensive plateaux and some wide valleys. Most of it is from 4000 to 8000 feet above the sea, with many summits exceeding 14,000, though none reaches 15,000. A considerable part of it, including the desert of Nevada, does not drain into the ocean, but sees its feeble streams received by lakes or swallowed up in the ground.

Before we consider how these natural divisions have influenced, and must continue to influence, American history, it is well to observe how materially they have affected the climate of the continent, which is itself a factor of prime historical importance. Two points deserve special notice. One is the great extent of temperate area which the continent presents. As North America is crossed by no mountain chains running east and west, corresponding to the Alps and Pyrenees in Europe, or to the Caucasus, Himalaya and Altai in Asia, the cold winds of the north sweep down unchecked over the vast Mississippi plain, and give its central and southern parts, down to the Gulf of Mexico, winters cooler than the latitude seems to promise, or than one finds in the same latitudes in Europe. Nor ought the influence of the neighbouring seas to pass unregarded. Europe has, south of the narrow Mediterranean, a vast reservoir of heat in the Sahara: North America has the wide stretch of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, with no region both hot and arid beyond. Thus Tennessee and Arkansas, in the latitude of Andalusia and Damascus have a winter like that of Edinburgh twenty degrees further to the north; and while the summer of Minnesota, in latitude 45°, is as hot as that of Bordeaux or Venice in the same latitude, the winter is far more severe. Only the low lands along the Atlantic coast as far north as Cape Hatteras have a high winter as well as summer temperature, for they are warmed by the hot water of the Gulf Stream, just as the extreme north-eastern coast is chilled by the Polar current which washes it. The hilly country behind these southern Atlantic lowlands — the western parts of the two Carolinas, northern Georgia and Alabama — belongs to the Appalachian system, and is high enough to have cool and in parts even severe winters.

The other point relates to the amount of moisture. The first two of our four regions enjoy an ample rainfall. So do the eastern and the central parts of the Mississippi basin. When, however, we reach the centre of the continent, some four hundred miles west of the Mississippi, the air grows dry, and the scanty showers are not sufficient for the needs of agriculture. It is only by the help of irrigation that crops can be raised all along the east foot of the Rocky Mountains and in the valleys of the fourth region, until we cross the Sierra Nevada and

come within two hundred miles of the Pacific. Through great part of this Rocky Mountain region, therefore, stock rearing, or "ranching," as it is called, takes the place of tillage, and in many districts there is not enough moisture even to support grass. Between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada there lie vast deserts, the largest that which stretches westward from the Great Salt Lake,[1] a desert of clay and stones rather than of sand, bearing only alkaline plants with low, prickly shrubs, and, apparently, destined to remain, save in some few spots where brooks descend from the mountains,[2] eternally sterile and solitary. Lofty as these environing mountains are, they bear scarce any perpetual snow, and no glaciers at all south of the fortieth parallel of north latitude.[3] The great peaks of Colorado lie little further south than the Pennine Alps, which they almost equal in height, but it is only in nooks and hollows turned away from the sun that snow lasts through the summer, so scanty is the winter snow-fall and so rapidly does evaporation proceed in the dry air. That same general north and south direction of the American mountain ranges, which gives cool winters to the Southern States, cuts off the west-borne rain-clouds from the Pacific, and condemns one half or more of our fourth region to aridity. On the other hand, North-western California, with the western parts of Oregon and Washington, washed by the Japan current, enjoy both a moderate and a humid — in some places very humid — climate, which, along the Pacific coast north of latitude 43°, resembles that of South-western England.

Reserving for the moment a consideration of the wealth-producing capacities of the regions at whose physical structure and climate we have glanced, let us note how that structure and climate have affected the fortunes of the people.

Whoever examines the general lines of a nation's growth, will observe that its development has been guided and governed by three main factors. The first is the pre-existing character and

[1] Similar but smaller deserts occur in Idaho and South-eastern Oregon, and also in the extreme south-west. Part of the desert of Southern California is, like part of the Sahara and the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, beneath the level of the ocean.

[2] In Central Colorado, when snow falls, it does not melt but disappears by evaporation, so dry is the air. Sir J. D. Hooker has (in his *Himalayan Journals*) noted the same phenomenon in Tibet.

[3] There is a small glacier on Mount Shasta.

habits of the Race out of which the Nation grows. The second is the physical aspect of the land the Nation is placed in, and the third embraces the international concomitants of its formation, — that is to say, the pressure of other nations upon it, and the external political circumstances which have controlled its movement, checking it in one direction or making it spread in another. The first of these factors may, in the case of the American people, be assumed as known, for their character and habits were substantially English.[1] To the second I will return presently. The third factor has been in the United States so unusually simple that one may dismiss it in a few sentences. In examining the origin of such nations as the German or French or Russian or Swiss or Spanish, one must constantly have regard to the hostile or friendly races or powers which acted on them; and these matters are, for the earlier periods of European history, often obscure. About America we know everything, and what we know may be concisely stated. The territory now covered by the United States was, from a political point of view, practically vacant when discovered in the end of the sixteenth century; for the aborigines, though their resistance was obstinate in places, and though that resistance did much to form the character of the Western pioneers, may be left out of account as a historical force. This territory was settled from three sides, east, south, and west, and by three European peoples. The Spaniards and French occupied points on the coast of the Gulf. The Spaniards took the shores of the Pacific. The English (reckoning among the English the cognate Dutchmen and Swedes) planted a series of communities along the Atlantic coast. Of these three independent colonizations, that on the Gulf was feeble, and passed by purchase to the Anglo-Americans in 1803 and 1819. That on the Pacific was still more feeble, and also passed, but by conquest, to the Anglo-Americans in 1848. Thus the occupation of the country has been from its eastern side alone (save that California received her immigrants by

[1] There were doubtless other influences, especially Dutch; but these (though a recent writer, Mr. Campbell, has ingeniously made the most of them) are, after all, relatively small, not ten per cent, so to speak, of the whole. Far more important than the diverse elements of blood were the conditions of colonial, and especially of frontier, life which moulded the young nation, repeating in the period between 1780 and 1820 many of the phenomena which had accompanied the first settlements of the seventeenth century.

sea between 1847 and 1867), and the march of the people has been steadily westward and south-westward. They have spread where they would. Other powers have scarcely affected them. Canada, indeed, bounds them on the north, but they have found no need to overflow into her narrow strip of habitable territory, whence, indeed, a million of people have come into their wealthier dominions. Like the Spaniards in South America, like the British in Australia, like the Russians in Siberia, the Anglo-Americans have had a free field; and we may pass from the purely political or international factor in the development of the nation to consider how its history has been affected by those physical conditions which have been previously noted.

The English in America were, when they began their march, one people, though divided into a number of autonomous communities; and, to a people already advanced in civilization, the country was one country, as if destined by nature to retain one and undivided whatever nation might occupy it.

The first settlements were in the region described above as the Atlantic Plain and Slope. No natural boundary, whether of water or mountain or forest, divided the various communities. The frontier line which bounded each colony was an artificial line,—a mere historical accident. So long as they remained near the coast, nature opposed no obstacle to their co-operation in war, nor to their free social and commercial intercourse in peace. When, however, they had advanced westwards as far as the Alleghanies, these mountains barred their progress, not so much in the North, where the valley of the Hudson and Mohawk gave an easy path inland, as in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Carolina. The dense, tangled, and often thorny underwood, even more than the high steep ridges, checked the westward movement of population, prevented the settlers from spreading out widely, as the Spaniards dispersed themselves over Central and South America, and helped, by inducing a comparatively dense population, to build up compact commonwealths on the Atlantic coast. So, too, the existence of this rough and, for a long time, almost impassable mountain belt, tended to cut off those who had crossed it into the western wilderness from their more polished parent stock, to throw them on their own resources in the struggle with the fierce aborigines of Kentucky and Ohio, and to give them that distinctive character of frontiersmen which was so marked a feature of American history during the first half of this century, and has left deep traces on the Western men of to-day.

When population began to fill the Mississippi basin the essential physical unity of the country became more significant. It suggested to Jefferson, and it led Congress to approve, the purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon, for those who had begun to occupy the valleys of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers felt that they could not afford to be cut off from the sea to which these highways of commerce led. Once the stream of migration across and around the southern extremity of the Alleghanies had begun to flow steadily, the settlers spread out in all directions over the vast plain, like water over a marble floor. The men of the Carolinas and Georgia filled Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas; the men of Virginia and Kentucky filled Southern Indiana, Southern Illinois, and Missouri; the men of New England, New York, and Ohio filled Michigan, Northern Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. From the source to the mouth of the Mississippi there was nothing to break them up or keep them apart. Every Western State, except where it takes a river as a convenient boundary, is bounded by straight lines, because every State is an artificial creation. The people were one, and the wide featureless plain was also one. It has been cut into those huge plots we call States, not because there were physical or racial differences requiring divisions, but merely because political reasons made a Federal seem preferable to a unitary system. As the size of the plain showed that the nation would be large, so did the character of the plain promise that it would remain united. When presently steamers came to ply upon the rivers, each part of the plain was linked more closely to the others; and when the network of railways spread itself out from the East to the Mississippi, the Alleghanies practically disappeared. They were no longer a barrier to communication. Towns sprang up in their valleys; and now the three regions, which have been described as naturally distinct, the Atlantic Slope, the Alleghanies, and the Mississippi Basin, have become, economically and socially as well as politically, one country, though the dwellers in the wilder parts of the broad mountain belt still lag far behind their neighbours of the eastern and western lowlands.