

Canadian Shield.—The portion of the Precambrian continent whose exposed surface still forms a large part of Canada has an area of about two and a half million square miles. Its northern border crosses the Arctic archipelago and the eastern lies beyond Baffin island and Labrador and reaches the depressed area occupied by the St. Lawrence river, a short spur or point crossing this valley at the outlet of lake Ontario to join the Adirondack mountains in New York. The southern boundary runs from this spur west to Georgian bay, skirts the north shore of lake Huron and sweeps almost around the ancient depressed area occupied by lake Superior. The western edge, from the lake of the Woods and lake Winnipeg, bears northwest to the western end of lake Athabaska, and passes through the basins occupied by Great Slave and Great Bear lakes, reaching the Arctic ocean east of the Mackenzie River delta. In detail, the surface features of the Canadian Shield are irregular, but, viewed broadly, it has the conformation of a great plain, depressed toward the centre and in the north, and slightly elevated along the eastern and southern borders where it presents a rather steep outward slope. The general elevation in the eastern portion is under 2,000 feet, and over the larger part of the plain is about 1,000 feet. The highest portion is along the northeastern margin, where it presents a steep face to the sea, rising to a maximum altitude of about 6,000 feet.

Appalachian Region.—The continuation of the Green mountains of Vermont into Canada may be traced in the Notre Dame mountains, which approach the St. Lawrence northeast of Quebec and, continuing with more easterly trend, form the highland of the Gaspé peninsula. Over a large part of the region, these hills hardly attain the dignity of mountains, but peaks rising more than 3,500 feet above the nearby coast are found in the Gaspé peninsula. The continuation of the White mountains of New Hampshire is found in the highlands of Maine and New Brunswick, the continuity being shown quite plainly by the rock-folding and other evidences of the great earth movements which caused the topography. An additional ridge apparently forms the present province of Nova Scotia, and although the highlands of that province rise only to elevations of less than 1,500 feet, the rock structure indicates that it was a mountainous country at no very remote geological period.

St. Lawrence Lowlands.—The southern interior of the continent consists of a plain of low relief, bordered on the east by the Appalachian mountains, on the west by the Cordilleran Mountain systems, and on the north by the Laurentian plateau. This plain, in its Canadian portion, is known as the St. Lawrence Lowlands, and extends from a short distance below Quebec city to lake Huron, south of Georgian bay, with a length of 600 miles and an area of 35,000 square miles. To the northeast it becomes reduced in width, and in the vicinity of Quebec is represented by a narrow plateau or shelf on each side of the St. Lawrence river.

Great Plains.—A great area, including diverse features, lies to the east of the Cordilleras. The portion that is included under the term Great Plains extends from the southwestern edge of the ancient surface, forming the Canadian Shield, to the eastern edge of the mountainous region of the Cordilleras. This area is characteristically different from other parts of Canada in that any exposure of surface rock is rare and generally it is overlain by great depths of soil, through which the streams have cut themselves down into deep coulées and the rivers into deep wide valleys. Lakes of any considerable extent are infrequent and usually quite shallow; in the dry prairie section there are many places where the absorption