

nearer approach to the mountains, increase in quantity and magnitude, forming gradual hills, which also increase in height, exhibiting extensive and most delightful prospects. Many spacious tracts of meadowland are confined by these rugged hills, burdened with grass six feet high. Other of these valleys are replenished with brooks and rivulets of clear water, whose banks are covered with spacious tracts of canes, which retaining their leaves the year round, are an excellent food for horses and cattle, and are of great benefit particularly to Indian traders, whose caravans travel these uninhabited countries; to these shady thickets of canes (in sultry weather) resort numerous herds of buffalo where solacing in these limpid streams they enjoy a cool and secret retreat. Pine barren, oak, and hickory land, as has been before observed to abound in the lower parts of the country, engross also a considerable share of these upper parts.

The richest soil in the country lies on the banks of those larger rivers, that have their sources in the mountains, from whence in a series of time has been accumulated by inundations such a depth of prolific matter, that the vast burden of mighty trees it bears, and all other productions, demonstrates it to be the deepest and most fertile of any in the country. Yet pity it is that this excellent soil should be liable to annual damage from the same cause that enriched it, for being subject to be overflowed lessens the value of it. In other places on the banks of these rivers extend vast thickets of cane, of a much larger stature than those before mentioned, they being between twenty and thirty feet high, growing so close, that they are hardly penetrable but by bears, panthers, wild cats, and the like. This land, in depth of soil, seems equal to the preceding, and is equally liable to inundations. Though the worst land is generally remote from rivers, yet there are interspersed spacious tracts of rocky ground, covered with a shallow but fertile soil. Many of these valleys are so regularly bounded by steep rocks, that in several of them remain only an isthmus, or narrow neck of land, to enter otherwise would be wholly enclosed. From these rocks gush out plentiful streams of limpid water, refreshing the lower grounds, and in many places are received into spacious basins, formed naturally by the rocks.

At the distance of about halfway between the sea and mountains, ten miles wide of Fort Savannah, there lies, scattered on the earth, irregular pieces of white stone, or alabaster, some very large, but in general they were from the size of a bushel to various degrees less; some lay under the surface, but none seemed to lie deep in the earth. These stones or pieces of rock extended five miles in width, where we crossed them, and, as the traders and Indians affirmed to me, three hundred in length, running in a north-westerly direction.

The Appalachian mountains have their southern beginning near the bay of Mexico, in the latitude of 30, extending northerly on the back of the British colonies, and running parallel with the seacoast, to the latitude of 40. By this parallel situation of the mountains and seacoast, the distances between the mountains and the maritime parts of most of our colonies on the continent, must consequently be pretty near equal in the course of their whole extent; but as the geography of these extensive countries is hitherto imperfect, the

western distances between the sea and mountains cannot be ascertained, though they are generally said to be above two hundred miles. The lower parts of the country, to about halfway towards the mountains, by its low and level situation, differ considerably from those parts above them, the latter abounding with blessings, conducing much more to health and pleasure; but as the maritime parts are much more adapted for commerce, and luxury, these delightful countries are as yet left unpeopled, and possessed by wolves, bears, panthers, and other beasts.

A great part of these mountains are covered with rocks, some of which are of a stupendous height and bulk; the soil between them is generally black and sandy, but in some places differently colored, and composed of pieces of broken rock, and spar, of a glittering appearance, which seem to be indications of minerals and ores, if proper search was made after them. Fossil coal fit for fuel hath been discovered on Colonel Byrd's estate in Virginia; chesnuts and small oaks are the trees that principally grow on these mountains, with some Chinapin, and other smaller shrubs; the grass is thin, mixed with vetch and wild peas; on some other tracts of these mountains is very little vegetable appearance.

In this state, with regard to the soil, and apparent productions, the mountains appear at the sources of the Savannah river, continuing so with little variation, as it is thought, some hundred miles north.

In the year 1714 I traveled from the lower part of St. James's river in Virginia to that part of the Appalachian mountains where the sources of that river rise, from which to the head of the Savannah river, is about four degrees distance in latitude. As some remarks I then made may serve to illustrate what I have now said, I hope it may not be amiss to recite so much of them as may serve for that purpose.

At sixty miles from the mountains, the river, which fifty miles below was a mile wide, is here contracted to an eighth part, and very shallow, being fordable in many places, and so full of rocks, that by stepping from one to another it was everywhere passable. Here we killed plenty of a particular kind of wild geese; they were very fat by feeding on fresh water snails, which were in great plenty, sticking to the tops and sides of the rocks. The low lands joining to the rivers were vastly rich, shaded with trees that naturally dislike a barren soil, such as black walnut, plane, and oaks of vast stature. This low land stretched along the river many miles, extending back half a mile more or less, and was bounded by a ridge of steep and very lofty rocks, on the top of which we climbed, and could discern some of the nearer mountains, and beheld most delightful prospects, but the country being an entire forest, the meanders of the rivers, with other beauties, were much obscured by the trees. On the back of this ridge of rocks the land was high, rising in broken hills, alternately good and bad. Some miles further the banks of the river on both sides were formed of high perpendicular rocks, with many lesser ones scattered all over the river, between which innumerable torrents of water were continually rushing.

At the distance of twelve miles from the mountains we left the river, and directed our course to the nearest of them. But