

sensible at the two extremities: in the eastern portion the chain which had regularly decreased in elevation suddenly rises again for 25 miles, and then sinks abruptly into the Mediterranean.

The principal mass of the Pyrenees is arid, rocky, precipitous and covered with snow and ice; but its spurs, being much less elevated, form smiling and fertile valleys. These spurs are detached nearly at right angles; those on the south, although longer than those on the north, have, notwithstanding, the steeper slope. Some of them are very considerable, and reach to the Ebro, which they impede in its course. The most remarkable and the longest of them runs between the Sègre and the Llobregat, like a long wall, parallel with the coast, and proceeds to join, upon the Ebro, the last hillocks of the Sierra Penagolosa. The highest part of the Pyrenees occurs near the middle of the chain, its average elevation being about 8184 feet. The lowest portion of this chain are its two extremities, which decrease in altitude to 2624 feet, and even to 1968 feet. The limit of perpetual snow is here at 8858 feet. The culminating points do not belong to the main ridge, but are found upon the southern spurs; they are the peak of Malladetta, 11,168 feet in height. The Pyrenees are interesting not only from their elevation and their mass, but still more so by reason of their natural riches, their picturesque beauty, their historical associations, their active and intelligent population, and finally, from their position between two powerful states, to both of which they form a protecting rampart. The passes formed by the depressions of this chain are very numerous, but very difficult; and the greater number of them are impracticable for carriages. We may note in the Western Pyrenees, that is to say, from the Gorge of Goritzy to the sources of the Adour and the Cizec:—

1. The road from Pampeluna to Bayonne, passing first by the Gorge of Belatte, in the great chain, and afterwards by the Gorge of Maya, in the ridge into Bidasson and Nivelle; it is a bad one, but important on account of the valley of Bastan, which it traverses by the way of Ellisondo. The two passes belong to Spain, and the road does not reach the French frontier until it touches the Nivelle.

2. The road from Pampeluna by Zubiri, the Gorge of the Alludes and the valley of Baigorry, to Saint Jean Pied-de-Port; it is exceedingly bad, passing through frightful gorges.

3. The route from Pampeluna passes Roncesvalles, the Gorge of Ibañeta (at a height of 5771 feet), and Orisson, to Saint Jean Pied-de-Port. This is a better road than the preceding, but runs