

it by the name of Serra do Espinhaço, and considers it as the principal part of the whole structure of the mountains of Brazil. This Cordillera loses itself northward,* between Minas Novas and the southern extremity of the Capitania of Bahia, in 16° lat. It is there more than 60 leagues removed from the coast of Porto Seguro; but southward, between the parallels of Rio Janeiro and Saint Paul (lat. 22° — 23°), in the knot of the mountains of Serra da Mantiquiera, it draws so near to the Cordillera of the shore (Serra do Mar), that they are almost confounded together. In the same manner, the Serra do Espinhaço follows constantly the direction of a meridian, towards the north; while towards the south it runs south-east, and terminates about 25° lat. The chain reaches its highest elevation between 18° and 21° ; and there the spurs and table-lands at its back are of sufficient extent to furnish lands for cultivation, where, at successive heights, there are temperate climates comparable to the delicious climates of Xalapa, Guaduas, Caracas, and Caripe. This advantage, which depends at once on the widening of the mass of the chain, and of its spurs, is nowhere found in the same degree east of the Andes, not even in chains of more considerable absolute height, as those of Venezuela and the Orinoco. The culminant points of the Serra do Espinhaço, in the Capitania of Minas Geraes, are the Itambe (932 toises), the Serra da Piedade, near Sabara (910 toises), the Itacolumi, properly Itacunumi (900 toises), the Pico of Itabira (816 toises), the Serras of Caraça, Ibitipoca, and Papagayo. Saint Hilaire felt piercing cold in the month of November (therefore in summer) in the whole Cordillera of Lapa, from the Villa do Principe to the Morro de Gaspar Suares.

We have just noticed two chains of mountains nearly parallel, but of which the most extensive (the littoral chain) is the least lofty. The capital of Brazil is situated at the point where the two chains draw nearest together and are linked together on the east of the Serra de Mantiqueira, if

* The rocky ridges that form the cataract of Paulo Affonso, in the Rio San Francisco, are supposed to belong to the northern prolongation of the Serra do Espinhaço, as a series of heights in the province of Seara (fetid calcareous rocks, containing a quantity of petrified fish,) belong to the Serra dos Vertentes.