

knot, or widening of the Cordilleras, is that the grouping of the summits is independent of the general direction of the axis. The backs of the mountains in New Spain form very elevated plains, along which carriages can roll for an extent of 400 leagues, from the capital to Santa-Fe and Taos, near the sources of Rio del Norte. This immense table-land, in  $19^{\circ}$  and  $24\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  is constantly at the height of from 950 to 1200 toises, that is, at the elevation of the passes of the Great Saint Bernard and the Splügen. We find on the back of the Cordilleras of Anahuac, which lower progressively from the city of Mexico towards Taos, a succession of basins: they are separated by hills little striking to the eye of the traveller because they rise only from 250 to 400 toises above the surrounding plains. The basins are sometimes closed, like the valley of Tenochtitlan, where lie the great Alpine lakes, and sometimes they exhibit traces of ancient ejections, destitute of water.

Between lat.  $33^{\circ}$  and  $38^{\circ}$ , the Rio del Norte forms, in its upper course, a great longitudinal valley; and the central chain seems here to be divided into several parallel ranges. This distribution continues northward, in the Rocky Mountains,\* where, between the parallels of  $37^{\circ}$  and  $41^{\circ}$ , several summits covered with eternal snow (Spanish Peak, James Peak, and Big Horn), are from 1600 to 1870 toises of absolute height. Towards lat.  $40^{\circ}$  south of the sources of the Paduca, a tributary of the Rio de la Plata, a branch known by the name of the Black Hills, detaches itself towards the north-east from the central chain. The Rocky Mountains at first seem to lower considerably in  $46^{\circ}$  and  $48^{\circ}$ ; and then rise to  $48^{\circ}$  and  $49^{\circ}$ , where their tops are from 1200 to 1300 toises, and their ridge near 950 toises. Between the sources of the Missouri and the River Lewis, one of the tributaries of the Oregon or Columbia, the Cordilleras form in widening, an elbow resembling the knot of Cuzco. There, also, on the eastern declivity of the Rocky Mountains, is the partition of water between the Caribbean Sea and the Polar Sea. This point corresponds with those in the Andes of South America, at the spur of Cochabamba, on the east, lat.  $19^{\circ} 20'$  south;

\* The Rocky Mountains have been at different periods designated by the names of Chypewyan, Missouri, Columbian, Caous, Stony, Shining, and Sandy Mountains.