SPAIN, a country rather more than twice the size of Great Britain including the adjacent small islands, constitutes in its mainland portion about eleven-thirteenths of the Iberian Peninsula, and has in addition an insular area (in the Balearic and Canary Islands) of nearly 5000 square miles. On all sides except that of Portugal the boundaries are natural, the Peninsula being separated from France by the Pyrenees and on every other side being surrounded by the sea. On the side of Portugal a tract of inhospitable country led originally to the separa­tion between the two kingdoms, inasmuch as it caused the reconquest of the comparatively populous maritime tracts from the Moors to be carried out independently of that of the eastern kingdoms, which were also well peopled. The absence of any such means of intercom­munication as navigable rivers afford has favoured the continuance of this isolation. The precise line of this western frontier is formed for a considerable length by portions of the chief rivers or by small tributaries, and on the north (between Portugal and Galicia) it is determined to a large extent by small mountain ranges. The British rock of Gibraltar, in the extreme south of the peninsula, is separated from Spain by a low isthmus known as the Neutral Ground. The coast-line on the north and north­west is everywhere steep and cliffy. On the north there are numerous small indentations, many of which form more or less convenient harbours, but the current flowing along the coast from the west often leaves in the stiller water at their mouths obstructive bars. The best harbours are to be found on the *rias* or fiord-like indenta­tions in the west of Galicia, where high tides keep the inlets well scoured ; here occur the fine natural harbours of Pontevedra and Vigo, Coruna and Ferrol, the last one of the chief stations of the Spanish fleet. Less varied in outline but more varied in character are the Spanish coasts on the south and east. Flat coasts prevail from the frontier of Portugal to the Straits of Gibraltar. Between the mouth of the Rio Tinto and that of the Guadalquivir they are sandy and lined by a series of sand- dunes (the tract known as the Arenas Gordas). Next follows a marshy tract at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, after which the coast-line becomes more varied, and includes the fine Bay of Cadiz. From the Straits of Gibraltar a bold and rocky coast is continued almost right round to Cape Palos, a little beyond the fine natural harbour of Cartagena. North of Cape Palos a line of flat coast, beginning with the narrow strip which cuts off the lagoon called the Mar Menor from the Mediterranean, bounds half of the province of Alicante, but in its northern half this province, becoming mountainous, runs out to the lofty headland of Cape Nao. The whole coast of the Bay of Valencia is low and ill-provided with harbours ; and along the east of Catalonia stretches of steep and rocky coast alternate with others of an opposite character.

The surface of Spain is remarkable at once for its strik­ing contrasts and its vast expanses of dreary uniformity. There are mountains rising with Alpine grandeur above the snow-line, but often sheltering rich and magnificent valleys at their base. Naked walls of white limestone tower above dark woods of cork, oak, and olive. In other parts, as in the Basque country, in Galicia, in the Serrania de Cuenca (between the head waters of the Tagus and those of the Jucar), in the Albarracin (between the head waters of the Tagus and those of the Guadalaviar), there are extensive tracts of undulating forest-clad hill country,

and almost contiguous to these there are apparently boundless plains, or tracts of level tableland, some almost uninhabitable, and some streaked with canals and richly cultivated—like the Requena of Valencia. While, again, continuous mountain ranges and broad plains and table­lands give the prevailing character to the scenery, there are here and there, on the one hand, lofty isolated peaks, landmarks for a wide distance round, such as Monseny, Monserrat, and Mont Sant in Catalonia, the Pena Golosa in Valencia, Moncayo on the borders of Aragon and Old Castile, and, on the other hand, small secluded valleys, such as those of Vich and Olot among the Catalonian Pyrenees.

The greater part of the interior of Spain is composed of a tableland bounded by the Cantabrian Mountains in the north and the Sierra Morena in the south, and divided into two by a series of mountain ranges stretching on the whole from east to west. The northern half of the table­land, made up of the provinces of Leon and Old Castile, has an average elevation estimated at about 2700 feet, while the southern half, made up of Estremadura and New Castile, is slightly lower—about 2600 feet. On all sides the tableland as a whole is remarkably isolated, and hence the passes on its boundary and the river valleys that lead up to it from the surrounding plains are geographical features of peculiar importance. The isolation on the side of Portugal, where the tableland gradually sinks to the sea in a succession of terraces, has already been referred to. On the north-west the valley of the Sil and a series of valleys further south, along both of which military roads have been carried from an early period, open up communication between Leon and the hill country of Galicia, which explains why this province was united to Leon even before the conquest of Portugal from the Moors. The passes across the Cantabrian Mountains in the north are tolerably numerous, and four of them are already crossed by railways. The two most remarkable are the Pass of Pájares, across which winds the railway from Leon to Oviedo and the seaport of Gijon, and that of Reinosa leading down to the deep valley of the Besaya, and now crossed by the railway from Valladolid to Santander. In its eastern section the chain is crossed by the railways from Burgos to Bilbao and San Sebastian, the latter of which winds through the wild and romantic gorge of Pancorbo (in the north-east of the province of Burgos) before it traverses the Cantabrian chain at Idiazabal.

On the north-east and east, where the edge of the tableland sweeps round in a wide curve, the surface sinks on the whole in broad terraces to the valley of the Ebro and the Bay of Valencia, and is crowned here and there by more or less isolated mountains, some of which have been already mentioned. On the north-east by far the most important communication with the Ebro valley is formed by the valley of the Jalon, which has thus always formed a military route of the highest consequence, and which is now traversed by the railway from Madrid to Saragossa. Further south the mountains clustered on the east of the tableland (Albarracin, Serrania de Cuenca) render direct communication between Valencia and Madrid extremely difficult, and the principal communica­tions with the east and south-east are effected where the southern tableland of La Mancha merges in the hill country which connects the interior of Spain with the Sierra Nevada.

In the south the descent from the tableland to the