the south, rounds its edges near the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and rears the highest part of its curve on the Spanish territory, between the springs of the rivers Cinca and Ara. This eminence, called *Mont Perdu* by the French, is known, in Aragon, by the appellation of Tres Sorores, alluding to its three peaks, distinctly seen from Saragossa, of which the highest rises 4114 Spanish yards above the level of the sea. The line of perpetual congelation is there at the height of 2924 yards.

In the minor branches which strike off from the Pyrenees in a south direction, without forming a part of the great secondary chains, which we shall presently describe, there are some mountains too remarkable to be left unnoticed. Such are the Monsein, on the coast of Catalonia, near the town of Arens, and the well-known Monserrat, which rises, on the same coast, to the height of 1479 yards above the sea ; such the Sierras of Ribagorza, Barbastro, Hucsca, and Jaca, which take their names from the principal cities in their neighbourhood ; such, finally, those numerous spurs of the great ridge which run into Navarre, whose various appellations would only tend to confuse the reader.

Of the main ridges which run across the Peninsula, that which rises to the west of the source of the Ebro was called *Idubcda* by the Romans, and formed the limits of the ancient *Celtiberia.* In its course towards the Mediterranean, the natives, according to a general custom, distinguish the various portions or great links of the chain by the appellation of *Sierras,* adding the name of some town or notable height in their vicinity. Such are the Sierra de Oca of Urbion (the *Distertiæ* of the middle ages), of Moncayo (*Mons* *Caunus),* of Molina, Albarracin, and Cuenza. Part of this chain forms the limits of Aragon and Castille ; it then penetrates into Valencia, Murcia, and Granada, and ends in the Capes Oropesa (Tenebrium), Martin, Palos, and Gata. The small town of Alcolea, in the province of Soria, stands on this chain, at the height of 1486 yards above the sea. Its mean elevation, on the road between Molina and Teruel, in Aragon, is 1580 yards.

The first point where this great ridge splits into the minor chains, which lose themselves in the Mediterranean, is to the north of Albarracin, in Aragon. Of these branches the most remarkable is that which, entering the province of Valencia, is again subdivided into the smaller ridges which terminate at Peñiscola and Cape Oropesa. The waters that descend from these heights, to the north, mix finally with the Ebro, while the Turia and the Mijares are swelled by those which flow from the southern declivities. On the branch stretching towards Peñiscola, and in the limits of Ara gon, rises the Muela de Ares, a conical mountain, deprived of its apex ; whose top is an extensive plain covered with luxuriant pasture, and surrounded by fearful precipices, at the elevation of 1562 Spanish yards above the sea. This is one of the highest spots in the Peninsula. The Tagus, the Xucar, and the Cabriel, take their rise among these mountains, and divide the waters which flow from their sides between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Numerous flocks of sheep, both itinerant and stationary, find, in the valleys formed by this chain, the most abundant summer pastures.

From Albarracin, this chain strikes into the territory of Cuenza, in a direction nearly north and south. It then sends off a branch to the east-south-east, on which the Collado de la Plata, or Silver Hill, rises 1598 yards above the sea. It contains a quicksilver mine, which was formerly worked. From the neighbourhood of this town the Sierra de Espadan runs, like an unbroken bulwark, to the sea near Murviedro, in a direction between southeast and north west. These hills are described as singularly grand and picturesque.

Near the source of the Tagus, the Iberian ridge sends off another branch, which, stretching in almost a southern

direction, separates La Mancha from the province of Murcia, to the west of the town of Albacete, and rises into the lofty mountains of Alcaraz and Segura (the ancient *Orospedα),* dividing the waters between the Guadalquivir and the Segura, the two main streams which severally and finally convey them to the ocean and the Mediterranean. One of the two great limbs which terminate the Iberian ridge runs into the sea at Cape Cervcra; the other, bending to the south, skirts the kingdom of Granada, and disappears at Cape Gata. To the latter belongs the mountain called Cabezo de Maria, between Carthagena and Cape Gata, one league west of the town of Vera, on the coast of Valencia. It rises 2287 yards above the sea, and has its summit covered with snow during one half of the year.

Smaller brunches of this chain project between the Turia and the Cabriel, which loses itself in the Xucar at Cofrentes. A ridge runs between the last-mentioned river and the Al coy, another stream, which flows into the sea near Gandia. A minor chain separates the Alcoy and the mouth of the Segura. The province of Valencia is, in fact, divided by mountains into most fertile stripes, watered by numerous streams, and enjoying every blessing which nature grants to the most favoured climates.

The great ridge whose summits divide the waters be tween the Duero and the Tagus grows out of the Iberian chain, not far from the sources of the Xalon and the Ta juña, to the south of the city of Soria, and the site of the ancient Numantia. Where it divides the province of Guadalaxara from that of Soria, it is called Sierra de Paredes, and Altos de Baraona. On one of the hills, north of Sigu enza, rises the Henares, which gives its name to the ancient *Complutum,* now Alcala de Henares, the seat of a university. Near the source of the Lozoya, a rivulet which runs into the Xarama, these mountains are called Somosierra, till, more to the west, they bear the name of Guadarrama ; an appellation which they preserve throughout the long course in which they skirt the provinces of Segovia, Avila, Guada 1axara, and Madrid. The Puerto de Navacerrada, the highest point on the road from Madrid to the summer pa lace of San Ildefonso, is 2204 yards above the sea.

The mountains of Guadarrama are a very striking object when seen from the neighbourhood of Madrid, on the road to Old Castille. They principally consist of naked, fractured granite rocks, heaped up together, and adorned only towards their bases with single evergreen oaks, while the upper parts are bleak, dreary, and barren, presenting fantastic prominences, and in many places covered with perpetual snow. This chain, in its course towards Portugal, where it ends in the Rock of Lisbon, rises into some re markable elevations. We shall notice that of Peñalara, be tween the sources of the Eresma and the Lozoya, 2834 yards above the sea ; the Puerto del Pico, in the province of Salamanca; the Peña de Francia, and Sierra de Gata, on the northern limits of Spanish Estremadura.

The minor branches run nearly north and south from the main ridge, and may be traced from the opposite course of the rivers which flow either into the Duero and the Mifio, or into the ocean, on the western coast of Galicia.

Almost parallel to the mountains of Guadarrama, we find the ridge which divides the waters between the Tagus and the Guadiana ; but it rises to no great height, and is altogether of minor importance.

The third great branch of the Iberian ridge is the Sierra Morena *(Montes Mariani),* which divides the waters be tween the Guadiana and the Guadalquivir. It begins in the vicinity of Alcaraz, near the eastern limits of the pro vince of La Mancha, issuing from that spur of the Iberian chain which terminates in Cape Palos, and, trending in a direction northeast and southwest, with La Mancha and Spanish Estremadura to the north, and Jaen, Cordoba, Seville, and Algarve in Portugal, to the south, ends in the