

and pine forests which clothe the highest ridges. Along the banks of the larger streams, and from 1,500 to 2,000 feet up the mountain ridges, is a tropical forest which also extends across the level flats in the Tarai at the base of the outer spurs. On dry slopes in the hills and along old river beds in the Tarai there is little undergrowth, but elsewhere it is dense and luxuriant. In the forests which clothe the hills in the sub-temperate zone from 2,000 to 5,000 feet, bamboos, plantains and palms are numerous, the screw pine is commonly seen, and the graceful tree-fern with its feathery crown is abundant. Above 5,000 feet is the temperate zone, in which maples, oaks, chestnuts and magnolias are met with in great abundance; the trees are mantled with ferns, mosses and epiphytic orchids; and the white-flowered magnolia blossoms so profusely in places that the forests on the flanks of the mountains appear as if sprinkled with snow. Orchids cease to be abundant at 8,000 feet, from which level rhododendrons are plentiful, some growing into great trees and others clothing the hill-sides with a thick growth of shrubs. At a still higher level the ridges are crowned by clumps of pine trees, often blasted by lightning or twisted and gnarled by the violent storms to which they are exposed. The effect in either case is equally picturesque, as they stand out against the line of snowy peaks which bounds the horizon.

**MOUN-
TAINS.**

The Himalayan range has been commonly divided into three zones:—the great range of snowy peaks, which, roughly speaking, form the axis of the chain; the Lower or Outer Himālayas, forming a broad belt of mountains of inferior, though still considerable, altitude south of the snows; and, thirdly, the comparatively low hills forming the Sub-Himalayan zone, either as ridges or spurs contiguous with the outer hills or separated from them by the flat-bottomed valleys known as *Duns*. In Darjeeling the mountains belong to the Lower Himālaya zone and consist of long tortuous ranges, running generally from north to south throughout its length. The Sub-Himalayan zone is altogether wanting, and the detached ridges met elsewhere in the Himālayas are unrepresented; while the snowy range lies far beyond the limits of the district to the north, where it gives the appearance of a long range of mountains stretching east and west at an average distance of about 50 miles. This range forms the great backbone of the Darjeeling Himālayas. To the north-west tower the giant peaks of Kinchinjunga (28,146 feet), and to the north east is Dongkya (23,184 feet) at a distance of rather less than 50 miles. From Kinchinjunga the Singalilā range, an immense ridge 60 miles long, stretches south to the plains, forming the boundary