



BOTAFOGO BAY, RIO DE JANEIRO.

SOUTH AMERICA.

Area, 6,850,000 square miles; greatest extent from north to south, 4,600 miles; and from east to west, 3,200 miles; population, 29,350,000; persons to square mile, 4.

South America comprises the southern portion of the American continent from the Isthmus of Panama. It is bounded on the north by the Caribbean Sea; on the west by the Pacific Ocean; on the south by the Antarctic Ocean; and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean.

Like the Northern Continent, South America may be divided into four great regions, besides the narrow strip of land between the Andes and the Pacific, viz.: the north-eastern slope, or valley of the Orinoco; the great central plain, or valley of the Amazon, extending from the Andes on the Pacific coast to the Atlantic Ocean, across the widest part of the continent; the Atlantic slope from the mountains of Brazil eastward; and the south-eastern slope, or valley of La Plata, consisting chiefly of vast pampas or desert plains.

The great chain of the *Andes*, over 4,000 miles in length, extends from the extreme north to the southern point of the continent, parallel with the Pacific coast, from which it is never more than 200 miles distant. The Andes are only exceeded in height by a few peaks of the Himalayas, but even these they surpass in the vast extent and size of their rugged masses. In the north they consist of three parallel chains, soaring to their greatest height when they unite in the high table-lands of Quito, in Ecuador, which are 6,000 feet above the sea. Here they form a mass of active volcanoes from 18,000 to 20,000 feet above the sea, their summits covered with perpetual snow. Amongst these are Chimborazo (20,650);

Cotopaxi, the most dreaded volcano; Antisana, and others. They then extend south in two parallel chains, enclosing Lake Titicaca, which is 12,540 feet above the sea, and 125 miles in length, and discharges into a smaller lake, which has no apparent outlet. On the table-lands between Bolivia and Peru they form another group of immense peaks of nearly equal height, comprising Illimani, Sorata, Sahama, Arequipa, and others. From here they extend southwards in one chain, till, from covering an area 400 miles in breadth, they gradually narrow down to 20 in Patagonia. The highest summits in the whole range are Sorata in Bolivia, 21,470 feet, Sahama, also in Bolivia, 22,350 feet, and Aconcagua, near Valparaiso, in Chili, 22,422 feet high, the highest peak in America.

In the north-east are the parallel chains of the Parimé and Acarai Mountains, rising to an elevation of from 7,000 to 10,000 feet. To the east, in Brazil, there are several chains of mountains, generally stretching from north to south, but not of any great height.

In the Andes are the sources of some of the greatest rivers in the world. The *Amazon* rises in Peru, receives on the north bank the *Napo*, *Putumayo*, *Yapura*, and *Negro*—the latter forming a remarkable connection with the Orinoco, by means of the *Cassiquiare River*; and on the south bank, the *Ucayali*, *Purus*, *Madeira*, *Tapajos*, and *Xingu*; and flows into the Atlantic by an estuary 180 miles wide at its mouth, after a course of over 4,000 miles. It is navigable to the mouth of the Ucayali, over 2,000