

Bacon;* to the decrease of humidity in the atmosphere, and of the quantity of rain owing to the destruction of forests; † to the decrease of heat with the increase of elevation above the level of the sea; and to the lower limit of the line of perpetual snow. The fact of this limit being a *function of geographical latitude* was first recognized by Peter Martyr Anghiera in 1510. Alonso de Hojeda and Amerigo Vespucci had seen the snowy mountains of Santa Marta (*Tierras nevadas de Citarma*) as early as the year 1500; Rodrigo Bastidas and Juan de la Cosa examined them more closely in 1501; but it was not until the pilot Juan Vespucci, nephew of Amerigo, had communicated to his friend and patron Anghiera an account of the expedition of Colmenares, that the *tropical snow region* visible on the mountainous shore of the Caribbean Sea acquired a great, and, we might say, a cosmical importance. A connection was now established between the lower limit of perpetual snow and the general relations of the decrease of heat and the differences of climate. Herodotus (ii., 22), in his investigations on the rising of the Nile, wholly denied the existence of snowy mountains south of the tropic of Cancer. Alexander's campaigns indeed led the Greeks to the Nevados of the Hindoo-Coosh range (*δρη ἀγάννιφα*), but this is situated between 34° and 36° north latitude. The only notice of snow in the equatorial region with which I am acquainted, before the discovery of America, and prior to the year 1500, and which has been but little regarded by physicists, is contained in the celebrated inscription of Adulis, which is considered by Niebuhr to be later than Juba and Augustus. The knowledge of the dependence of the lower limit of snow on the latitude of the place, ‡ the first insight into the law of the vertical decrease of temperature, and the sinking of an

* An observation of Columbus. (*Vida del Almirante*, cap. 55; *Examen Crit.*, t. iv., p. 253; and see, also, vol. i., p. 316.)

† The admiral, says Fernando Colon (*Vida del Alm.*, cap. 58), ascribed the extent and denseness of the forests which clothed the ridges of the mountains to the many refreshing falls of rain, which cooled the air while he continued to sail along the coast of Jamaica. He remarks in his ship's journal on this occasion, that "formerly the quantity of rain was equally great in Madeira, the Canaries, and the Azores; but since the trees which shaded the ground have been cut down, rain has become much more rare." This warning has remained almost unheeded for three centuries and a half.

‡ See vol. i., p. 329; *Examen Crit.*, t. iv., p. 294; *Asie Centrale*, t. iii., p. 235. The inscription of Adulis, which is almost fifteen hundred years older than Anghiera, speaks of "Abyssinian snow, in which the traveler sinks up to the knees."