

IMAGINARY CIRCLES ON THE GLOBE.

10. Great and small circles.—There are two kinds of circles on the globe, great and small circles. Great circles divide the earth into two equal parts; such are: the equator and the meridians. Small circles divide the earth into two unequal parts; the small circles are the parallels of latitude, the tropics and polar circles.

11. Equator.—The Equator is an imaginary line which encircles the earth at equal distances from the poles; that is to say, 90° from each. It divides the globe into two equal parts, called hemispheres, or half globes. That part which is on the side of the Arctic Pole is called the Northern Hemisphere; that on the Antarctic side is called the Southern Hemisphere.

The Equator is also called the Equinoctial line (which signifies equal nights) because the days are equal to the nights, when the sun seems to pass over it in his annual revolution. The Equinoxes happen about the 20th of March, and the 23d. of September.

12. Meridians.—Meridians are great circles, which, passing through the Poles, go round the earth, dividing it into two hemispheres: that on the right is called the Eastern Hemisphere; that on the left, the Western Hemisphere. Meridians may be drawn through every place on the earth.

Among the meridians, there is one called the first Meridian, because it passes through a place agreed upon. English Geographers make the Meridian that passes through Greenwich, their first meridian; the French take the Meridian of Paris.

Meridians mark the longitude or the distance of any place from the first Meridian. On the map of the world, the longitude is marked on the equator. There are 180° of east longitude, on the right of the meridian, and 180° west longitude on the left. On particular maps and on general maps, longitude is marked at the top, and at the bottom.