

through the solstitial points Capricorn and Cancer: The former is called the equinoctial, the latter the solstitial colure.

TROPICS.] The tropics are two circles drawn parallel to the equator, at the distance of $23^{\circ} 30'$ on each side of it. These circles form the limits of the ecliptic, or the sun's declination from the equator. That which is in the northern hemisphere is called the tropic of Cancer; because it touches the ecliptic in the sign Cancer; and that in the southern hemisphere, is called the tropic of Capricorn, because it touches the ecliptic in the sign Capricorn. On the 21st of June the sun is in Cancer, and we have the longest day. On the 21st of December the sun is in Capricorn, and we have the shortest day. They are called **TROPICS**, from the Greek word *Tropē*, to TURN, because when the sun arrives at them, he returns again to the equator.

POLAR CIRCLES.] The two polar circles are described round the poles of the earth, at the distance of $23^{\circ} 30'$. The **NORTHERN** is called the **ARCTIC CIRCLE**, from **ARCTOS**,

or the bear, a constellation situated near that place in the heavens; the **SOUTHERN**, being opposite to the former, is called the **ANTARCTIC CIRCLE**.—The polar circles bound the places where the sun sets daily. Beyond them the sun revolves without setting.

ZONES.] The tropics and polar circles divide the globe into five parts, called **ZONES**, or **BELTS**; viz. One torrid, two temperate, and two frigid zones.

The **TORRID ZONE**, 47 degrees broad, is bounded by the tropics, and divided in the middle in the equator. It is called the torrid or burning zone, because the sun, being always over some part of it, makes it extremely hot.

Each of the **TEMPERATE ZONES** is 43 degrees in breadth. The one which lies between the tropic of Cancer and the arctic circle, is called the north temperate zone; and the other, lying between the tropic of Capricorn and the antarctic circle, is called the south temperate zone. The mildness of the weather in these spaces, which are between the extremes of heat and cold, has acquired to them the name of **TEMPERATE ZONES**.