

Between the 40th and 31st parallels many of the Andean summits aspire above the limits of perpetual snow; and the conical forms of some indicate that they are or have been vents of the volcanic fires. The Colossus of the range, and the monarch of the mountains of the New World, is Aconcagua, whose frosty crown rises above the Chilian village of the same name, in latitude $32^{\circ} 39' S$. It must have been extinct for ages, though still designated a volcano by many of our geographers. Its flanks, like those of its sister peaks, are clothed with dense green forests of araucarias and other semi-tropical plants.

On the east, the Andes of Chili are bounded by two secondary chains, which, heavy with luxuriant woods, stretch far away into the undulating pampas. The more southern of these is named the Sierra de Cordova; the more northern, the Sierra di Salta.

The Peruvian Andes begin in latitude $24^{\circ} S$., and are separated from the Pacific by a range of low hills, composed of crystalline rocks and a belt of sandy desert, whose shifting sands are seldom refreshed by genial rains.

North of the 21st parallel, the chain of the Andes strikes across a very elevated longitudinal valley, bounded on each side by a still more elevated wall of mountains. These parallel chains, for their direction varies but slightly, intersect each other at several points, where they form gigantic mountain-knots, or shoot across in transverse ranges "like dykes." The incline on the Pacific side is remarkably steep.

Unlike the table-lands of Asia of a similar elevation, where agriculture can only make its rude essays in a few sheltered spots, or the lower European plateaus, which furnish but a scanty pasturage for cattle, the lofty regions of the Andes, as Mrs. Somerville remarks, yield "exuberant crops of every European grain;" while, at altitudes not inferior to that of the Teneriffe peak, or the Dôme du Goûter of Mont Blanc, are situated populous towns, teeming with busy life, with universities, libraries, and all the institutions of law, order, and religion.