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Climatic barriers! These barriers in the past stopped explorations about as effectively as did the fear of falling off a flat earth. The prevailing westerly winds and storms (cyclones) probably greatly delayed the discovery of America. Mountain ranges were crossed with great difficulty because of the severity of the weather, with the blinding glare of the sun, avalanches, low temperatures, rarity of the air, and lack of vegetation. The polar regions were not explored until years of trial taught man just how he should feed and clothe himself and how to use sleds and dogs. Deserts, with their vast stretches of parching sand, made walking and breathing difficult.

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