

## T H E

## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

**T**O ascertain the following Particulars hath been long Matter of eager Enquiry, as well among the curious as the commercial Part of Mankind, whether there is a Possibility of reaching the *East-Indies* by a shorter Way than that of doubling the *Cape of Good Hope*; and whether the two great Continents of *Asia* and *America* do actually any where join or not. In regard to the first Article, there are at present only two Maritime Tracts known, by which we have a Communication with the *East-Indian* Part of the Globe; the first, round the Southernmost Promontory of *Africa*, to the Eastward; the second, that still more Southernly one of *America*, called *Cape Horn*, to the Westward. The former of these, is the only one used by the several Nations of *Europe*, whose Commerce invites them to the *Indian Seas*, as being by much the shorter of the two, though a long and most tedious Voyage. Various have been the Methods thought upon to facilitate our Navigation to these Parts, to shorten the vast Circuit we are forced to make, and to save both the Time and Trouble expended in sailing round the Continent of *Africa*. As a Remedy against this Inconvenience, a Scheme was proposed to cut a Canal through the Neck of Land, that lies between the most Northern Extent of the *Red Sea*, and the opposite Part of the *Levant*, (which dividing *Asia* from *Africa*, renders the latter a great Peninsula,) and so to open a Passage to the *Indian Sea* from the *Mediterranean* through the Straits of *Babelman*. This Scheme, though concerted, and begun to be put in Execution, was