

THE RUSSIAN DISCOVERIES, &c. 445

of discovery. The care of this expedition, which was agitated and determined during my second visit to Petersburgh in 1785, is committed to Captain Billings, an English naval officer in the Russian service, who is well qualified to conduct such an undertaking, as he accompanied Captain Cook in his last celebrated voyage to the Pacific Ocean. I shall briefly state the plan and purport of this expedition.

According to its first object, Captain Billings is to proceed by Irkutsk, Yakutsk, and Okotsk, to Kovimskoi Ostrog: having traced the course of the Kovyma, and settled by astronomical observations the exact position of its mouth, he will endeavour to delineate the coasts extending from that point to Cape North, the utmost period of Cook's navigation on the North-eastern shores of Siberia. For this purpose he will embark in such vessels as are usually employed for coasting voyages in the Frozen Ocean; fix the longitude and latitude of the principal parts by astronomical observations; form exact charts of the bays and inlets which he may have occasion to explore; and cause views to be taken of the bearings, head-lands, and re-

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