

papers in the library, which could throw light upon the History of America, should be transmitted to me. The letter from Cortes is not in the Imperial Library, but an authentic copy, attested by a notary, of that written by the magistrates of the colony planted by him at Vera Cruz, which I have mentioned, Vol. ii. p. 32, having been found; it was transcribed and sent to me. This, no less curious, and as little known as the letter which was the object of my inquiries, did not come to my hand till that part of the history to which it relates was printed; but I have given some account of what is most worthy of notice in it, at the end of Notes and Illustrations, vol. ii. Together with it, I received a copy of a letter from Cortes, containing a long account of his expedition to Honduras, with respect to which, I did not think it necessary to enter into any particular detail; and likewise those curious Mexican paintings, which I have described vol. ii. p. 284, &c.

My inquiries at St. Petersburg were carried on with equal facility and success. In examining into the nearest communication between our continent and that of America, it became of consequence to obtain authentic information concerning the discoveries of the Russians, in their navigation from Kamchatka towards the coast