

and several circumstances concurred not only in confirming them in this belief, but in persuading them that some portion of that continent could not be very remote. Trees of various kinds unknown in those naked regions of Asia were driven upon the coast by an easterly wind. By the same wind, floating ice was brought thither in a few days; flights of birds arrived annually from the same quarter; and a tradition obtained among the inhabitants, of an intercourse formerly carried on with some countries situated to the east.

“After weighing all the particulars, and comparing the position of the countries in Asia which had been discovered, with such parts in the north-west of America as were already known, the Russian court formed a plan, which would have hardly occurred to a nation less accustomed to engage in arduous undertakings, and to contend with great difficulties. Orders were issued to build two vessels at the small village of Ochotz, situated on the sea of Kamschatka, to sail on a voyage of discovery. Though that dreary uncultivated region furnished nothing that could be of use in constructing them, but some large trees; though not only the iron, the cordage, the sail, and all the numerous articles requisite for their equipment, but the provisions for victualling them were to be carried through the immense deserts of Siberia, down rivers of difficult navigation, and along roads almost impassible, the mandate of the sovereign, and the perseverance of the people, at last surmounted every obstacle. Two vessels were finished, and, under the command of the Captains Behring and Tschirikow, sailed from Kamschatka, in quest of the new world in a quarter where it had never been approached. They shape their course towards the east; and though a storm soon separated the vessel, which never rejoined, and many disasters befell them, the expectations from the voyage were not altogether frustrated. Each of the commanders discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent; and according to their observation, it seemed to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. Each set some