

The execution of such an undertaking, in such distant regions, and in so high a latitude, must necessarily be attended with extreme difficulty and hazard. For the points of distance between Icy Cape and the north western extremity of Baffin's Bay, include a space of no less than seventy-one degrees longitude : of which nearly the central point has been explored by Hearne alone *.

It must be nevertheless admitted, that such inquiries, however interesting to increase our knowledge of the globe, do not tend to throw any new light on the practicability of a north-east passage ; which has been disproved by the obstacles and difficulties encountered by the Russians in navigating the Frozen Ocean †, and more particularly by the undoubted testimony of Cook himself.

3. The new-discovered islands remain to be considered. We have already remarked, that, as Cook observed only a few of those numerous islands which lie scattered in the Eastern Ocean between Asia and America, the position and description of the remainder are to be drawn from the Russian accounts. It cannot be denied that the Russians have frequently corrupted their names, increased their number, and mistaken their situation. It is probable, indeed, that Synd may have augmented the number of islands which lie near the coasts of the Tchutski ; that St. Theodore, Imyak, and Tzetchina, which are laid down among the Aleutian Isles in the general map of Russia, do not exist ; and that the Andranofski Isles, which are considered as a separate group, form the most westerly part of that extensive chain termed the Fox Islands, of which Unalashka, so amply described by Cook and the Russians, is nearly the center.

It may be urged, however, that, if the inaccuracy of the Russian charts, in general, be admitted, and their accounts are justly

* See Introduction to Cook's Voyage.

† See Russian Discoveries, p. 330.