

to introduce here some slight account of their history and native inhabitants.

The sagacious mind of Peter the Great having been stimulated by accounts collected from Kamtchadals, and transmitted to St. Petersburg, concerning the vicinity of the north-eastern point of Asia to the north-western angle of America, devised an expedition to ascertain their correctness; this, however, was delayed, by his death; but the Empress Catharine, in accordance with his written instructions, immediately on ascending the throne, despatched Vitus Beering, or, as he is more commonly called, Behring, a native of Denmark in the Russian service, to obtain information on this point. On the 14th of July, 1728, he left the river Kamtchatka in the "Fortune," with two lieutenants and forty men; and having coasted the Kamtchadal, Koriak, and Tchutskoi countries as far as $67^{\circ} 18'$ north, returned, having unawares passed but a very few miles through the Straits which now bear his name. This unconsciousness is rather curious, as he had some intercourse with people in their boats, who would seem to have been Tchutski, who inhabit a country on the coast of Asia, within thirty miles of the American continent; they, however, informed him that their nation, although travelling with rein-deer as far as the Kovyma, or Kolyma,