

INTRODUCTION.

SINCE the independence of the United States of America, the merchants of that industrious and enterprising nation have carried on an extremely advantageous commerce on the northwest coast of this continent. In the course of their voyages they have made a great number of discoveries which they have not thought proper to make public; no doubt to avoid competition in a lucrative business.

In 1792, Captain Gray, commanding the ship *Columbia* of Boston, discovered in latitude $46^{\circ} 19'$ north, the entrance of a great bay on the Pacific coast. He sailed into it, and having perceived that it was the outlet or estuary of a large