

what ought to be the first considerations, namely, the preservation of the adventurers and ships; and this will ever chiefly depend on the kind, the size, and the properties of the ships chosen for the service.

These primary considerations will not admit of any other that may interfere with the necessary properties of the ships. Therefore, in choosing the ships, should any of the most advantageous properties be wanting, and the necessary room in them be in any degree diminished, for less important purposes, such a step would be laying a foundation for rendering the undertaking abortive in the first instance.

As the greatest danger to be apprehended and provided against on a voyage of discovery, especially to the most distant parts of the globe, is that of the ship's being liable to be run aground on an unknown desert, or, perhaps, savage coast, so no consideration should be set in competition with that of her being of a construction of the safest kind, in which the officers may, with the least hazard, venture upon a strange coast. A ship of this kind must not be of a great draught of water, yet of a sufficient burden and capacity to carry a proper quantity of provisions and necessaries for her complement of men, and for the time requisite to perform the voyage.

She must also be of a construction that will bear to take the ground; and of a size which, in case of necessity, may be safely and conveniently laid on shore, to repair any accidental damage or defects. These properties are not to be found in ships of war of forty guns, nor in frigates, nor in East India Company's ships, nor in large three-decked West India ships, nor indeed in any other but north-country-built ships, or such as are built for the coal-trade, which are peculiarly adapted to this purpose.

In such a vessel an able sea-officer will be most venturesome, and better enabled to fulfil his instructions, than he possibly can (or indeed than would be