

To the Reader.

f Lib a. nat. hist.
cap. 67.

¶ In Timæo.

¶ *noti Strabo* (1571)
mauepgraw.

pomene, signified vnto the Portugales in plaine termes; that Africa, except the small Isthmus between the Arabian gulf and the Mediterran sea, was on all sides enuironed with the Ocean? And for the further confirmation thereof, doth he not make mention of one Neco an Egyptian King, who (for trials sake) sent a Fleet of Phoenicians downe the Red sea; who setting forth in Autumne and sailing Southward till they had the Sunne at nooneside vpon their sterbourd (that is to say, hauing crossed the Equinoctial and the Southerne tropique) after a long Navigation, directed their course to the North, and in the space of 3.yeeres enuironed all Africk, passing home through the Gaditan streites, and arriuing in Egypt: And doth not ¶ Plinie tell them, that noble Hanno, in the flourishing time and estate of Carthage, sailed from Gades in Spaine to the coast of Arabia foelix, and put downe his whole iournall in writing? Doth he not make mention, that in the time of Augustus Cesar, the wracke of certaine Spanish ships was found floating in the Arabian gulf? And, not to be ouer-tedious in alleaging of testimonies, doth not Strabo in the 2.booke of his Geography, together with Cornelius Nepos and Plinie in the place before named, agree all in one, that one Eudoxus fleeing from king Lathyrus, and valing downe the Arabian bay, sailed along, doubled the Southern point of Africk, and at length arriued at Gades? And what should I speake of the Spaniards? Was not diuine ¶ Plato (who liued so many ages ago, and plainly described their West Indies vnder the name of Atlantis) was not he (I say) in stead of a Cosmographer vnto them? Were not those Carthaginians mentioned by Aristotle lib. ¶ de admirabil. auscult. their forerunners? And had they not Columbus to stirre them vp; and pricke them forward vnto their Westerne discoveries; yea, to be their chiefe loads-man and Pilot? Si then therefore these two worthy Nations had those bright lampes of learning (I meane the most ancient and best Philosophers, Historiographers and Geographers) to shewe them light; and the load-starre of experience (to wit those great exploits and voyages layed vp in store and recorded) whereby to shape their course: what great attempt might they not presume to vndertake? But alas our English nation, at the first setting forth for their Northeasterne discovery, were either altogether destitute of such cleare lights and inducements, or if they had any wrangling at all, it was as misty as they found the Northren seas, and so obscure and ambiguous, that it was meet rather to deterre them, then to giue them encouragement.

But besides the foresaid vncertaintie, into what dangers and difficulties they plunged themselves, Animus meminisse horret, I tremble to recount. For first they were to expose themselves vnto the rigour of the sterne and uncouth Northren seas, and to make triall of the swelling waues and boistrous winds which there commonly do surge and blow: then were they to saile by the ragged and perillous coast of Norway, to frequent the vnhauunted shoares of Finmark, to double the dreadfull and misty North cape, to beare with Willoughbies land, to run along within kenning of the Countreys of Lapland and Corelia, and as it were to open and vnlocke the seven-fold mouth of Diuina. Moreover, in their Northeasterly Navigations, vpon the seas and by the coasts of Condora, Colgoieuc, Petzora, Ioughoria, Samoedia, Noua Zembla, &c. and their passing and returne through the streits of Vaigatz, vnto what drifts of snow and mountaines of yce euen in Iune, Iuly, and August, vnto what hidcous ouerfals, vncertaine currents, darke mists and fogs, and diuers other fearefull inconueniences they were subiect and in danger of, I wish you rather to learne one of the voyages of sir Hugh Willoughbie, Stephen Burrough, Arthur Pet and the rest, then to expect in this place an endlesse catalogue thereof. And here by the way I cannot but highly commend the great industry and magnanimity of the Hollanders, who within these few yeeres haue discovered to 78.yea (as themselves affirme) to 81.degrees of Northerly latitude: yet with this prouiso; that our English nation led them the dance, brake the yce before them, and gaue them good leaue to light their candle at our torch. But now it is high time for vs to weigh our ancre, to hoist up our sailes, to get cleare of these boistrous, frosty, and misty seas, and with all speede to direct our course