
THE QUEBEC MAGAZINE

FOR OCTOBER 1792.



Account of Giovanni and Sebastian Cabotto.

Sequel of the voyages of Columbus and Vespucci. The discovery of Labrador—the question examined whether it was discovered by Giovanni or Sebastian—Lord Verulam's account of Cabotto compared with others—Variation of the Compass.

A Venetian, viz, Giovanni Cabotto, who, before any other, ventured to attempt the passage by the North Sea to the East Indies, was a competitor with Columbus and Vespucci in resolution, and the science of navigation. He was, by profession, a merchant; and in the way of commerce had gone to England with his son Sebastiano. There he conceived the idea of attempting the above mentioned passage; and having proposed it to King Henry VII. obtained his consent. The letters patent, issued for this purpose by that Sovereign, in the year 1496, are contained in the collection of voyages by Hackluyt, (1) and in the public transactions of England by Rymer; (2) and they are addressed:

Joanni Cabotto, Civi Venetiarum, ac Lodovico, Sebastiano, & Sancto ejus filijs.

The authors of the History of voyages assign some reason of doubt, (3) whether this voyage was carried into execution 'till many years after; and it seems they are inclined to believe, that it did not take place 'till towards 1516, although afterwards they elsewhere contradict themselves, and fix it in 1497, (4) without shewing any doubt at all. But if they had reflected on the passage of Peter Martire d'Angiera, where he speaks of Sebastian, they would have known that it certainly happened many years before. He had continually in his house Sebastiano Cabotto, whilst he resided in Spain, and says, that he had been called from England to the court of the Catholick King, after the death of Henry VII.

Familiarem habeo domi Cabottum, ipsum & contubernalem interdum. Vocatus namque ex Britannia a Regé nostro Catholico post Henrici majoris Britannia Regis mortem concursalis noster est (5).

Now

Now

(1) P. 3, &c. (2) Vol. xii. p. 595. (3) T. xlv. p. 279. (4) T. lviii. p. 256.

(5) Ocean, Dec. iii. l. 7.