

CAPTAIN SABINE TO DAVIES GILBERT, M.P. VICE
PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

Portland Place, Feb. 8, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

I beg to trouble you with a few remarks on the project of measuring an arc of the meridian at Spitzbergen, previous to its discussion at the Council of the Royal Society.

It is not necessary that I should at this time enter on the reasons which have induced, for more than a century past, measurements to be made of portions of the meridian, for the purpose of determining the figure of the earth. The question now is, rather, shall all that has been effected hitherto in this method, with so much labour and expense, remain in its present incomplete and inconclusive state? or, shall the method be pursued until the result which it is capable of giving be attained?

There have been two arcs measured in the vicinity of the Equator; the Indian one, in particular, deserving of the highest consideration from its extent, and from the care bestowed on its details. To give to these arcs their full value in the proposed determination, there