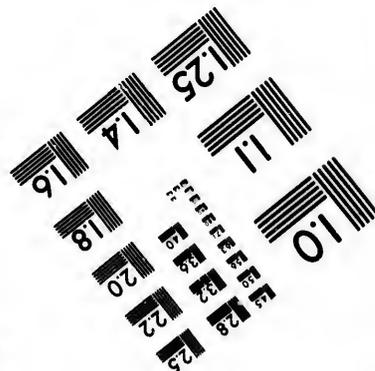
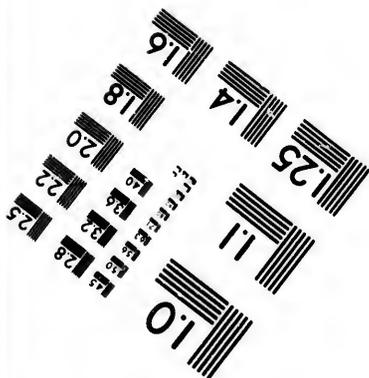
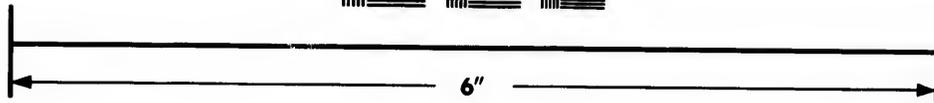
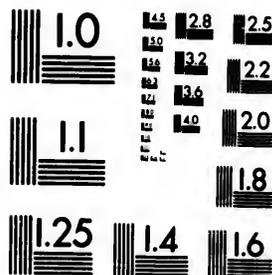


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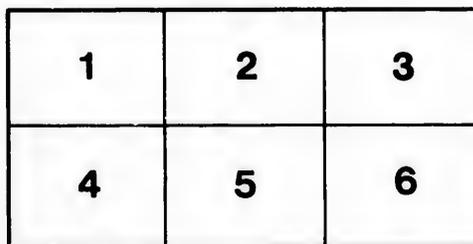
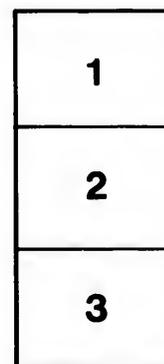
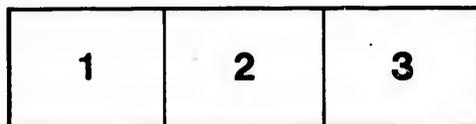
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BY WILLIAM COXE, A.M. F.R.S.

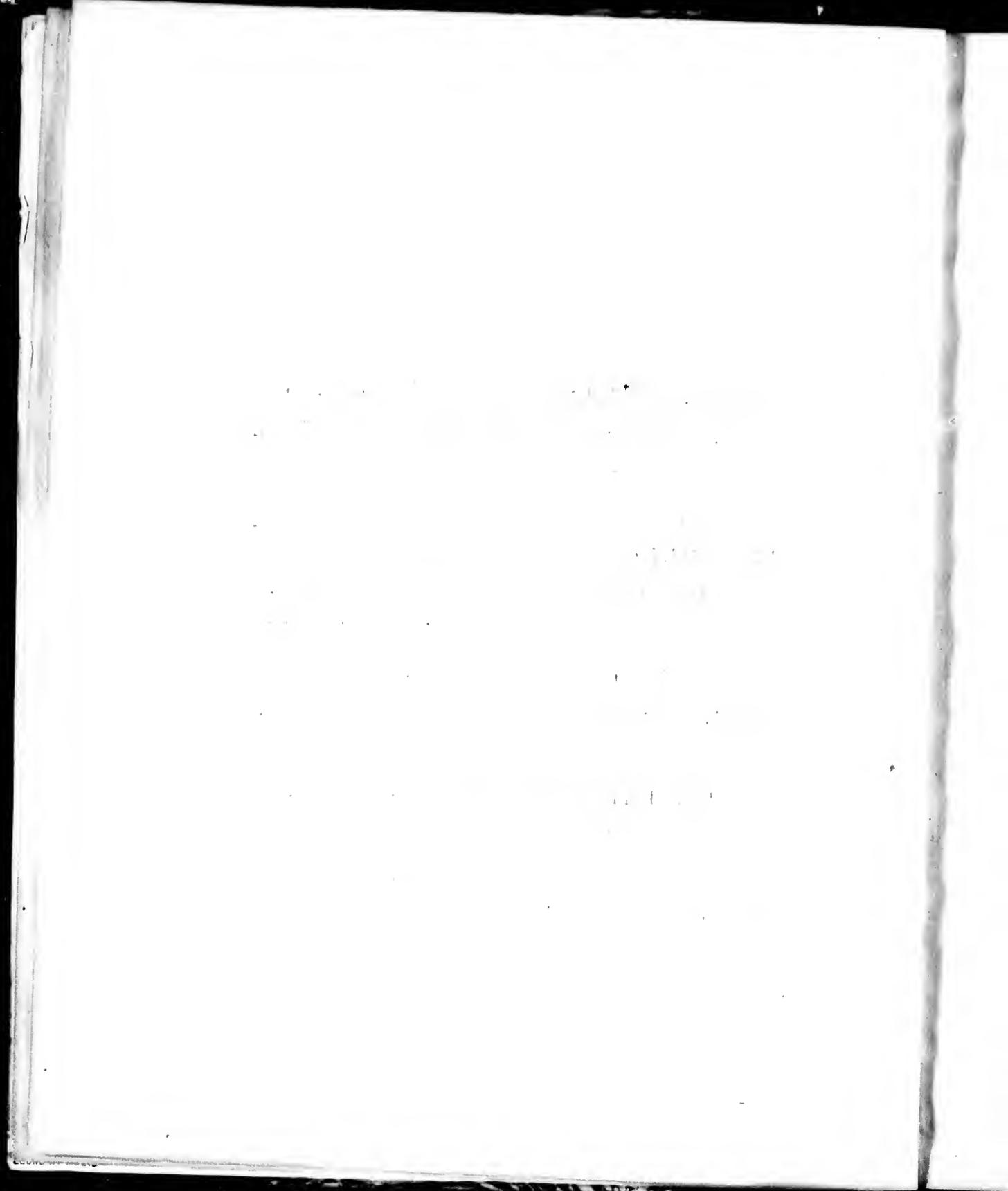
One of the Senior Fellows of King's College, Cambridge; Member of the Imperial O conomical Society at St. Petersburg, of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Copenhagen; and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of MARLBOROUGH.

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MDCCLXXXVII.

T O
PETER SIMON PALLAS, M. D. F. R. S.
COUNSELLOR OF THE BOARD OF MINES TO THE
EMPRESS OF RUSSIA, MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AT ST. PETERSBURGH, &c. &c.
THE FOLLOWING ATTEMPT TO COMPARE
THE DISCOVERIES OF A NATION,
WHOSE CIVIL, TOPOGRAPHICAL, AND
N A T U R A L H I S T O R Y
HE HAS SO AMPLY ELUCIDATED, IS INSCRIBED
BY
HIS FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,
WILLIAM COXE.

Cambridge,
April 25, 1787.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE author would have arranged, at a more early period, the following Comparative View, which seems necessarily connected with his former publication on the Russian Discoveries; if he had not been absent from England when Cook's Voyage first made its appearance; and if continued travels and avocations had not prevented him from consulting those books, charts, and manuscripts, which the examination of so intricate a subject required.

Mr. Pallas has lately favoured the public, in his *Neue Nordische Beytraege*, with several curious particulars concerning the Tchutski, the two islands lying between East Cape and Cape Prince of Wales, and relative to the New-discovered islands. An extract of some of these particulars is given by Mr. Pennant in his Introduction to the Arctic Zoology, and more amply in his Supplement to that interesting work, in which the reader will find an excellent map of those parts, which are mentioned in this Comparative View.



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C H A P I.

A comparative View of the Russian Discoveries, with those made by Cook and Clerke. 1. On the Coast of Asia. 2. On that of America. 3. With respect to the New-discovered Islands.

AS my account of the Russian Discoveries, printed in 1780, contained the principal intelligence at that time known; and as, since its publication, a new light has been thrown upon that important subject by Cook and Clerke, I shall, in this chapter, compare the discoveries of the Russians with the subsequent observations of the English navigators. 1. On the coast of Asia, 2. on that of America; and 3. with respect to the New-discovered Islands.

The accuracy of Krasnikof's observations, at the Port of St. Peter and St. Paul, has been confirmed by Captain Cook. The latter places that harbour in lat. $53^{\circ} 1''$, long. $158^{\circ} 36''$ east*; the former in lat. $53^{\circ} 0'' 38''$, long. $176^{\circ} 10''$ from Fero, or $158^{\circ} 35''$ from Greenwich. The difference is only 22 seconds in the latitude; and 7 minutes in the longitude. Hence the assertion of Vaugondy, that the Russians had advanced the peninsula of Kamtchatka eleven degrees too much to the east, and of Engel, who supposed that error to be no less than 29 degrees, is evidently confuted; and the justness of the astronomical observations, made by the Russian geographers,

* It is necessary to apprise the reader, that, in this Supplement, whenever the longitude given by Cook is mentioned, it is taken from the meridian of Greenwich. The reader is also desired to consult the maps and charts which accompany Cook's Voyage to the Pacific Ocean.

which I attempted to prove in the second number of the Appendix to the Russian Discoveries, is now incontrovertibly ascertained.

Though we cannot expect nearly the same accuracy in the longitude of those places, which have not been laid down by astronomical observations; yet we shall find, perhaps, that the errors of the Russians, even under such disadvantages, have not always been so great, as might reasonably be supposed. Thus while the latitude of Kamtchatka Nofs, and of Kronotskoi Nofs the most north-easterly point in the peninsula of Kamtchatka, agrees with the latitude of those places, given by Captain Cook, their longitude is laid down $2' 46''$ too much to the west; and the same error seems to prevail in the bearings of the Kamtchatka Coast, as traced on the Russian charts.

Towards the north, the deficiency in the longitude is far more considerable. The promontory of St. Thaddæus, the most north easterly point in the country of the Koriacs, lies, according to Cook, in lat. $62' 50''$, long. $180'$; and is situated, on the general map of Russia, in lat. 63 , long. 190 , from Ferro, or $172' 25''$ from Greenwich; which gives a difference of only $50'$ in the latitude, but of $7' 35''$ in the longitude.

The next point of land observed by the English navigators, was that promontory called by Beering Tchukotskoi Nofs, a name adopted by Captain Cook, but which is denominated by most of the Russian geographers Anadirskoi Nofs, from its position on the Bay of the Anadyr. The application of the term Tchukotskoi Nofs to this promontory, may, perhaps, occasion some confusion to future navigators and geographers, as that appellation has been usually given, and ought therefore to be appropriated to the eastern extremity of Asia, the East Cape of Cook.

From Anadirskoi Nofs, placed by the English in lat. $64' 13''$, under the name of Tchukotskoi Nofs, to Cape Serdze Kamen, in
lat.

lat. 67. the utmost extent of Beering's navigation to the north, Captain Cook, with great candour, does justice to the memory of Beering, by observing, that "he has here delineated the coast very well, and fixed the latitude and longitude of the places better than could be expected from the methods he had to go by*."

Within this space our great navigator has corrected the errors of the Russian charts, and ascertained the position of the real Tchukotkoi Nofs, which Muller had erroneously conjectured to lie above the 70th degree of latitude. He calls this great promontory of the Tchutski East Cape, proves it to be the most eastern extremity of Asia, and fixes its latitude in 66' 6'', and long. 190' 22''. Thus he has unquestionably shewn, that the Russians did not err in asserting, that the north eastern extremity of Asia stretched beyond the 200th degree of longitude from the Isle of Fero, or 182' from Greenwich.

The earliest and most important of the Russian voyages in these parts, as it first ascertained the separation of the two continents, is that remarkable expedition of Deshnef, in which, according to Muller, he sailed from the mouth of the Kovyma, doubled Tchukotkoi Nofs, or the East Cape of Cook, and was

* Cook's Voyage, vol. II. p. 474. The reader is desired to correct a passage in the note, p. 323, of my Russian Discoveries; in which I asserted, upon the authority of Muller, that Beering, in his expedition to the northern coasts of Asia, did not double the north eastern promontory of that continent, properly called Tchukotkoi Nofs. Whereas it appears, from a comparative view of Beering's and Cook's discoveries, that the former actually passed that celebrated point; and, that Cape Serdze Kamen, the utmost extent of his voyage, is situated to the north and not, according to Muller, to the south of the said promontory. Captain Cook, who alone could ascertain these points, and whose judgment must be considered as decisive, informs us, that Muller's account of Beering's expedition, and that part of the chart prefixed to his Russian Discoveries, which refers to that expedition, are less accurate than the relation of the same voyage, and the annexed map published by Dr. Campbell in the second edition of Harris's Collection of Voyages.

shipwrecked in the Sea of Kamtchatka. An account of this expedition is given in my Russian Discoveries*. But as, from want of circumstantial evidence, many persons still doubt, whether Deshnef failed round this celebrated promontory; it may not, perhaps, be uninteresting to state a few particulars in Cook's narrative, which may seem to corroborate the authenticity of Deshnef's voyage.

Deshnef's description of the North Eastern Cape corresponds in several material circumstances with that of the same promontory given by Cook. According to Deshnef it "*consists almost entirely of rocks* †." Cook says, that "it shews a steep rocky cliff next the sea; and at the very point are *some rocks like spires*." "The land about this promontory is composed of hills and vallies: "the former terminate at the sea in *steep rocky points*, and the latter in low shores. The hills seemed to be *naked rocks* ‡."

Deshnef adds, that, on the coast near the promontory, the natives had reared a *pile like a tower, with the bones of whales*. Cook likewise noticed these piles as very common on the coast of the Tschutski. "Over the dwelling stands a kind of sentry box, *composed of the large bones of large fish*;" and again, "near the dwellings were erected stages of *bones*, such as before described §." Cook also agrees with Deshnef in placing two small islands directly opposite to the promontory; and Captain King || confirms another assertion of the Russian navigator, that the passage from the same promontory to the mouth of the Anadyr may, with a fair wind, be performed in seventy-two hours**.

* See p. 314.

† "Aus lauter Felsen bestunde." S. R. G. III. p. 17.

‡ Cook's Voyage, Vol. II. p. 472.

§ Vol. II. p. 451, 472.

|| Vol. III. p. 264.

** The reader will find these two last-mentioned points more fully discussed by Captain King, Vol. III. p. 264.

To those persons who object to Deshnef's narrative, because Cook and Clerke were, in two successive years, prevented by the ice from penetrating into the frozen ocean; it may be replied, that Deshnef passed in a small vessel, which might more easily be worked through than the English ships; and that the year, in which Deshnef sailed round, is represented as more free from ice than usual. The season also, in which Deshnef probably doubled the great Siberian promontory, was more favourable to navigation in the Frozen Sea, than the times of the year employed by the English. For although he sailed on the first of July *, yet he does not appear to have arrived in the Eastern Ocean until the latter end of September. Soon after Ankunidof's vessel was shipwrecked on Tchukotkoi Nofs, Deshnef mentions, that he landed on the first of October †, and skirmished with the Tchutski. It follows therefore, from the length of the interval between the day of his departure from the mouth of the Kovyma to his arrival in the Eastern Ocean, that he probably waited for an opportunity of getting through the ice, which he at length effected. Whereas Cook quitted that dreary region on the 29th of August; and Clerke, so early as the month of July. The middle and the latter end of September are generally esteemed the most proper periods for navigating the Frozen Ocean.

The sole aim of Deshnef being to sail from the Kovyma to the Anadyr, it was not incompatible with his plan to continue on the coast, and to persevere in expecting a favourable occasion for executing his purpose, without exposing himself to those difficulties and dangers, which seamen from more distant quarters must necessarily experience. On the contrary, the grand design of the English navigators being to ascertain the practicability of a North Eastern passage, and having incontrovertibly determined

* June 20, O. S.

† Sept. 20, O. S.

that important question in the negative, they accomplished the primary object of their expedition. They could not therefore, consistently with their views and instructions, by delaying their departure from those frozen regions, hazard the danger of being hemmed in by the ice, in order merely to show the possibility of getting round to the Kovyra.

Should all these circumstances be considered as proofs, that Deshnev performed this much-disputed voyage; yet, as he neither made any astronomical observations, nor traced a chart of the coast, his expedition, though it decided the long-agitated dispute concerning the separation of the two continents, did not, however, contribute to an accurate knowledge of the north-eastern extremity of Asia, for which we are indebted to Cook alone.

2. The discoveries of the Russians on the Continent of America come next under consideration. Several of those coasts, visited by the Russians, which they supposed, though on very uncertain grounds, to be parts of America, and which they had imperfectly described, have been ascertained by Cook to belong to that Continent.

Thus Cook * discovered a great mountain on the Coast of America, in latitude $58^{\circ} 53''$, longitude $220^{\circ} 52''$, which he allows to be the same as Beering's Mount St. Elias, lying, according to his estimation, in latitude $58^{\circ} 28''$, longitude 236° , from Ferro, or $218^{\circ} 25''$ from Greenwich. The difference in latitude is merely 28 seconds, and of longitude only $2^{\circ} 27''$; and the descriptions of it, given by Cook and Beering, exactly agree.

Cook † likewise explored the same Continent, situated in latitude $54^{\circ} 43''$ and $55^{\circ} 20''$, in longitude $224^{\circ} 44''$, which makes it probable, that the land visited by Tchirikof, and placed by

* Vol. II. p. 346.

† Ib. p. 343.

THE RUSSIAN DISCOVERIES, &c. 15

him in latitude 56', longitude 241' from Fero, or 223' 25'' from Greenwich; was really a part of America.

Alaxa, called sometimes Alaxsu, Alachshak and Alashka, reached by many Russians *, particularly by Krenitzin and Levatchef, and supposed to be a great island in the vicinity of America, was found by Cook to be a promontory of that Continent. Its south-western point, represented on Krenitzin's chart, in latitude 54' 42'', longitude 206' 50'', from Fero, or 189' 15'' from Greenwich, is laid down by Cook in latitude 54' 10'', longitude 195', which gives only a difference of 32 minutes in latitude, and 5' 45'' in longitude.

That promontory lying opposite to the country of the Tchutski, which, according to Muller †, was first seen by Gvozdof in 1730, and the most western point of which is represented on the chart that accompanies his Russian Discoveries, as lying in the 66th degree of latitude, and in the 211th of longitude from the Isle of Fero, or 193' 25'' from Greenwich. This point of land is probably the same as that touched at by Synd, and placed by him in latitude 64' 40'', and longitude 38' 15'' from Okotsk; or 181° 25' from Greenwich.

This promontory, named Cape Prince of Wales, Cook found to be the most western point of America hitherto explored, lying in latitude 65' 46', in longitude 191' 45'', which gives a difference of latitude from Muller of only 14 minutes, from Synd of 1' 20''; and of longitude from Muller of only 1' 40'', but from Synd of 10 degrees. It is distant from the eastern cape of Siberia only thirteen leagues. Thus Cook has the glory of ascertaining the vicinity of the two continents, which had only

* See Ruf. Dif. p. 65. 68, 69, 254.

† S. R. G. III. p. 131.

been

been conjectured from the reports of the Tchutski, and from the imperfect observations of the Russian navigators.

It reflects the highest honour even on the British name, that our great navigator extended his discoveries much further in one expedition, and at so great a distance from the point of his departure, than the Russians accomplished in a long series of years, and in parts belonging or contiguous to their own empire. But although we ascribe this tribute of applause to the man whose claim is indisputably founded; yet we ought not to withhold that portion of praise due to the Russians, for having first navigated those seas, and made those discoveries which the English have confirmed and greatly exceeded.

It must indeed be confessed, that Cook censures with justice Staehlin's chart of the New Archipelago*; and strongly condemns it as an imposition on the public; such fictions in a work so respectably vouched, as the most accurate representation of the New-discovered Islands, being calculated only to mislead future navigators. In fact, Muller also, and the best-informed Russians, had previously pronounced Mr. Staehling's account, and the annexed map, to be extremely erroneous †.

But our great navigator seems to have been too rigid in censuring Muller for placing Tchukotskoi Nofs in too high a latitude; and for "his very imperfect knowledge of the geography of these parts ‡." He did not sufficiently appreciate the merits of an author, who, though he unavoidably erred in some particulars, yet deserves great approbation for his sagacity in uniformly supporting the existence

* Vol. II. p. 475. 486. 506. particularly.

† Ruf. Dif. p. 28. 283, 284.

‡ Vol. II. 470, 471. See also p. 503

of Beering's Straits, and the vicinity of the two continents; when those opinions had been treated as chimerical. If Cook had been able to read Muller's account of the Russian Discoveries in the original German, and not in inaccurate translations*; if he had fairly weighed the extreme difficulty of drawing intelligence from imperfect journals of ignorant adventurers, from vague accounts, or uncertain tradition; if he had distinguished what Muller advances as conjectural †, from what he lays down as fact; if he had known that Muller had candidly acknowledged and rectified several mistakes; if he had compared his trifling sources of information with his own positive proofs; he would not have been offended by those inaccuracies, which must necessarily arise from such complicated and multifarious questions: he would probably have been less severe in his judgement of a writer, who first excited the curiosity of the public towards those discoveries, which occasioned his own glorious expedition, under the auspices of the sovereign who now sits upon the British throne.

3 . The new-discovered islands between Asia and America form the third part of the present inquiry.

As my former account of the Russian Discoveries renders it unnecessary to particularize all the islands visited by the Russians, and laid down in their charts, I shall only select the principal islands which were either ascertained, or appear to have been observed by the English navigators.

Kadyak, one of the most distant islands reached by the Rus-

* The English translation of that work is the most inaccurate.

† Mr. Muller's map of the north eastern coast of Siberia is allowed, by Captain King, "to bear a considerable resemblance to the survey of the English navigators, "as far as the latter extended †;" and it is to be observed, that the great promontory, which Muller lays down in latitude 75. as Tchukotskoi Nofs, is represented in his map as very uncertain; and as a country, the extent of which is wholly unknown. *Pays des Tschutski dont on ne connoit pas l'étendue.*

‡ Vol. III. p. 263.

fians, is fully described from Glottof's journal in the tenth chapter of my Russian Discoveries. It is placed by Glottof in the 230th degree of longitude from Fero, or 212' 25'' from Greenwich; and is supposed to be not far distant from the coast of a wide extended woody continent, or from that part of America which Beering formerly touched at. This conjecture is confirmed by Cook, who mentions it as contiguous to America, and forming one of an extensive group, which he imagines to comprise those called by Beering Shumagin's Islands*. Its true position is determined by Cook to be in latitude 55' 18'', and longitude 199. The difference of longitude will not appear so remarkably erroneous, when it is considered that Glottof's account was computed merely from ships reckonings, and that of Cook is founded on astronomical observations.

This group is part of that chain, called the Fox Islands; the longitude of which is very erroneously given upon all the Russian maps, and the latitude faithfully represented only on Krenitzin's chart; as will be more fully shewn in the comparative account of Unalaska.

The next island which Cook accurately describes is that named Halibut, probably the same as the island called Sannaga by Soloviof, in his journal, a manuscript extract of which I have in my possession. This island, termed Senagak by the Aleutian chief †, is slightly mentioned in my account of the Russian Discoveries ‡, but is not laid down in any of their charts under that name; it will probably appear to be Halibut's Island, by a comparative examination of the two descriptions given by Cook and Soloviof.

* Vol. II. p. 413.

† Russ. Dif. p. 296.

‡ It is not improbable, that this island is the same as Kita Managan, which is represented on Krenitzin's chart, as lying near to Alaxa, and which has nearly the same position as Halibut's Island in Cook's chart.

THE RUSSIAN DISCOVERIES, &c. 19

“ Halibut’s Island lies near to the promontory of Alaska, “ is seven or eight leagues in circuit, and, except the *head, which “ is a round hill, the land of it is very low and barren.* There are “ several small islands near it of a similar appearance; but there “ seemed to be a passage between them and the main, two or “ three leagues broad *.”

Soloviof †, who anchored in a bay of Sannaga, August 19, 1771, thus describes it:

“ Sannaga is situated not far from Unimak and Alaxa, and is “ separated from the latter by a channel of about twenty leagues. “ It appeared to be about eight leagues in length, and about a “ league and three quarters in breadth. On the northern side of “ the western point is a *small peak, joined to a low ridge of hills “ extending to the east and west, about a verst, or three quarters “ of a mile. Except this rising ground, the whole island is low and “ marshy.* It is watered by many springs and lakes, containing “ fish similar to those of Okotsk. *The island produces neither “ trees nor berries.* It is surrounded by many small islands. It “ is separated from a little island situated near its southern point “ by a strait, about a league broad, which is sometimes dry. In “ reconnoitring this island, Soloviof observed several deserted “ huts, but met with no inhabitants.”

Unalaska or Oonalaska, the largest island, next to Umnak, in the whole chain of the Fox Islands, and which has been frequently visited and described by the Russians, was also particularly observed by Cook, who anchored in a fine bay on the north side, called by the natives Sangonovodha, and of which he

* Vol. II. p. 416.

† I have only printed a small part of his journal, as it contains no material information, in addition to those journals already published in my Account of the Russian Discoveries. Soloviof sailed from Okotsk on this expedition to the Fox Islands on the 6th of September, 1770; and returned on the 16th of July, 1775.

has given a chart. Unalaska is placed by Cook in latitude $53^{\circ} 55''$, longitude $193^{\circ} 30''$; by Krenitzin in latitude $53^{\circ} 30''$, longitude $205^{\circ} 30''$ from Fero; or $187^{\circ} 55''$ from Greenwich; on the general map of Russia in latitude $58'$, longitude $225'$ from Fero; or $205^{\circ} 25''$ from Greenwich. Thus it appears, that in latitude Krenitzin only differs from Cook 25 minutes; and in longitude $5^{\circ} 35''$; whereas the general map of Russia varies $4^{\circ} 5''$ even in latitude, and in longitude $11^{\circ} 55''$. The same error also prevails in the position of Unimak, Umnak, Amughta, and the other isles adjacent to Unalaska, the situations of which are corrected and determined by Cook *. Here it may be remarked, that the relative position of that part of the Fox Islands, which stretches south-east from the head-land Alaxa, is well laid down in Krenitzin's chart; and that in all respects it deserves the preference over the representation of those islands on the general Map of Russia.

The description of Unalaska and of the contiguous islands, their extent, productions, and the manners of the natives, as given by Cook, corresponds entirely with the account of the same islands in the Russian Discoveries; and serves to prove, that the journals, from which my account was drawn, are in these respects faithful and accurate. No islands in the chain of the Fox Islands were observed by Cook to the west of Amughta: a few scattered Islands are indeed represented on the chart which accompanies his journal, not from his own observation, but from a map communicated by a Russian, named Ismailof, which I shall hereafter consider †.

Whether the island, called by Cook Gore's Island, lying in latitude $60^{\circ} 10''$, in longitude $187'$, may be considered

* See Cook's Voyage, Vol. II.

† Vol. II. p. 497, &c. See also Vol. III. p. 193, 194.

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as the island of St. Matthew, placed on Synd's chart in latitude $59^{\circ} 30''$, longitude $34^{\circ} 10''$ from Okotsk; or $176^{\circ} 42''$ from Greenwich; is a conjecture which may deserve inquiry. The difference of latitude is only 40 minutes; and the deficiency in the longitude of $10^{\circ} 18''$ nearly coincides with Synd's error of longitude observable in other instances, while the general outline of its coast, its relative size and bearings to the head-lands of the two continents, sufficiently agree in the two charts.

The existence of the island St. Laurence, observed by Beering near the Coast of Siberia, was also confirmed by Cook; and it is not without probability, that those called Clerke's, Anderson's, and King's Islands, may perhaps form part of that group observed by Synd, and represented, on his chart, as lying near the head-lands of the Tchutski.

The most eastern part of Copper Island is laid down, in the Russian charts, in latitude 55° , longitude 184° from Fero; or $166^{\circ} 25''$ from Greenwich; and, after the observations of the English, is determined to lie in latitude $54^{\circ} 28''$, longitude $167^{\circ} 52''$, which gives a difference of but $32'$ in the latitude, and of only $1^{\circ} 27''$ in the longitude.

C H A P. II.

Sketch of what remains to be ascertained.—1. On the coast of Asia.—2. On that of America.—3. And in relation to the New-discovered Islands.—Expedition of Captain Billings.

HAVING now reviewed and compared the Russian Discoveries with those made by Cook and Clerke, it is the design of this second chapter to lay before the reader what remains to be ascertained in those remote quarters of the globe. In treating this subject, I shall follow the same order which I adopted in the first; and endeavour to explain the *desiderata* towards completing the geography, 1. of the Asiatic coast; 2. of the American Continent; 3. of the New-discovered Islands.

1. What principally remains to be examined on the Asiatic coast, is that region of Siberia stretching from Cape North in latitude $68^{\circ} 56''$, longitude $180^{\circ} 51''$, the utmost extent of Cook's discoveries, to the mouth of the Kovyma in the Frozen Ocean.

Cook conjectures, and the conjectures of so great a man deserve to be weighed with the utmost attention, that the northern coast of Asia, from the Indigirka eastwards, has been laid down by the Russian geographers more than two degrees too much to the northward: and Captain King no less ingeniously conceives, that nearly the same error of longitude prevails in the bearings of the Asiatic coast in the Frozen Ocean, which is proved to

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exist in the eastern coast of Siberia*. If therefore it should be deemed probable, that the Kovyma is represented too much to the north and west, the distance between the mouth of that river and Cape North must be considerably less than is usually imagined †.

It now remains to determine the unknown coast between Cape North and Shelatskoi Nofs, the most eastern point traced by the Russians in the Frozen Ocean, to take a more accurate delineation of the shore between Shelatskoi Nofs and the Kovyma than has been effected by Shalaurof ‡, and to fix, by astronomical observations, the longitude and latitude of the mouth of the Kovyma.

2. The principal objects of examination on the American coast are the following parts of that continent, which Cook was prevented from exploring. That space reaching from Woody Point in latitude $50^{\circ} 1''$, and longitude $229^{\circ} 26''$, to latitude $33^{\circ} 22''$, longitude $225^{\circ} 14''$, comprizes $3^{\circ} 22''$ of latitude, and $4^{\circ} 12''$ of longitude; and is the more remarkable, as it contains the place where geographers have ascribed the strait of Admiral de Fonte. "And although there is little reason to give credit," as Cook expresses himself, "to such vague and improbable stories, as carry their own confutation §;" yet it is to be regretted, that he was prevented from entirely disproving those pretended discoveries which some persons still consider as authentic.

The shore between Shoal-Nefs, in latitude $60'$, longitude $198' 10''$, and Point Shallow Water, in latitude $63'$, longitude $198'$, is also entirely undescribed; and what renders this coast an in-

* See these questions fully and ably discussed by Captain King, Vol. III.

† Cook's Voyage, Vol. II. p. 263—270.

‡ See Shalaurof's Voyage and Chart in my Russian Discoveries.

§ Vol. II. p. 343.

teresting subject of inquiry, is the inference of Captain Cook, that here runs a considerable river from the continent into the sea*.

Perhaps it would well deserve the attention of some future navigator, to explore Cook's river still further than the English navigator was able to penetrate: he traced it as high as latitude $61^{\circ} 30''$, longitude 210° , seventy leagues or more from its mouth, without seeing the least appearance of its source. Perhaps this great river, which, to use Cook's expression †, "promises to vie with the most considerable ones already known to be capable of extensive inland navigation," may nearly join those waters and lakes which Hearne discovered in his curious expedition from Hudson's Bay to the Arapathescow Indians, recorded in Dr. Douglas's learned Introduction to Cook's Voyage ‡; and may thus help to establish an inland communication between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

To the north of Beering's Straits, the land of America from Point § Musgrave in latitude $67^{\circ} 45''$, longitude $194^{\circ} 51''$, to Icy Cape, in latitude $70^{\circ} 29''$, longitude $198^{\circ} 20''$, where Cook was totally stopped by the ice, was not, excepting a small portion near Cape Lisburne, and another to the south of that promontory, observed either by Cook or Clerke; and its true bearings must be ascertained by future navigators.

But the most important point of further inquiry is to trace the direction of the American continent from Icy Cape, whether it again trends to the north west, and, according to the reports of the Tchutski, approaches the coasts of Northern Siberia, or verges directly to the east towards Baffin's Bay.

* Vol. II. p. 497.

‡ P. XLVII.

† Ib. p. 396.

§ Vol. II. p. 454. 461.

The execution of such an undertaking, in such distant regions, and in so high a latitude, must necessarily be attended with extreme difficulty and hazard. For the points of distance between Icy Cape and the north western extremity of Baffin's Bay, include a space of no less than seventy-one degrees longitude : of which nearly the central point has been explored by Hearne alone *.

It must be nevertheless admitted, that such inquiries, however interesting to increase our knowledge of the globe, do not tend to throw any new light on the practicability of a north-east passage ; which has been disproved by the obstacles and difficulties encountered by the Russians in navigating the Frozen Ocean †, and more particularly by the undoubted testimony of Cook himself.

3. The new-discovered islands remain to be considered. We have already remarked, that, as Cook observed only a few of those numerous islands which lie scattered in the Eastern Ocean between Asia and America, the position and description of the remainder are to be drawn from the Russian accounts. It cannot be denied that the Russians have frequently corrupted their names, increased their number, and mistaken their situation. It is probable, indeed, that Synd may have augmented the number of islands which lie near the coasts of the Tchutski ; that St. Theodore, Imyak, and Tzetchina, which are laid down among the Aleutian Isles in the general map of Russia, do not exist ; and that the Andranofski Isles, which are considered as a separate group, form the most westerly part of that extensive chain termed the Fox Islands, of which Unalashka, so amply described by Cook and the Russians, is nearly the center.

It may be urged, however, that, if the inaccuracy of the Russian charts, in general, be admitted, and their accounts are justly

* See Introduction to Cook's Voyage.

† See Russian Discoveries, p. 330.

deemed imperfect, what advantages can be derived from their publication?

To this it may be replied, that considerable information may be obtained even from imperfect accounts, and that many points have, in effect, been ascertained, as the reader has already perceived in this Comparative View. We find even Cook himself anxious to procure intelligence from a Russian named Ismailof, from whom he received a chart of the Russian Discoveries. This chart, however, was not founded on the observations of a single navigator, but seems to have been a compilation from different charts and journals, and, consequently, extremely erroneous.

Nor does it appear that Ismailof either possessed, or had seen, Krenitzin's chart of the Fox Islands, which, according to the observations of the English, is proved to be the most accurate representation of the Fox Islands given by the Russians. The correction of this erroneous chart from Ismailof's own experience, and additional remarks, must have been still doubtful. For, as Captain Cook could not speak the Russian language, and as he had no Russian interpreter on board, the imperfect knowledge of this illiterate man was rendered still more imperfect by the only mode of communication they could adopt, that of conversing by signs.

And yet, under all these disadvantages, Cook gained some information relative to the position and number of the islands which he had not explored; an information which he has thought worthy to be laid before the public.

He particularly informs us, that "a passage was marked in Ismailof's chart, communicating with Bristol Bay, which covers about fifteen leagues on the coast, that I had supposed to belong to the continent, into an island distinguished by the name of Oonemak. This passage might easily escape us, as

“ we were informed that it is very narrow, shallow, and only to be navigated through with boats, or very small vessels *.”

The existence of this strait, which Cook has adopted in his chart, from Ismailof's observations, might likewise have been collected from Krenitzin's chart, and the several journals in my Account of the Russian Discoveries, wherein Unimak or Oone-mak is shewn to be an island separated from Alaxa, since proved to be the continent of America, by a narrow strait.

It must not be thought surprising, that a collection of voyages, performed by ignorant traders merely for the sake of obtaining furs, and not with a view of discovery, should be defective in determining the position and number of so many islands. We ought rather to wonder that the descriptions, in general, are tolerably accurate, and afford that degree of information which they are found to contain. Nor must it be forgotten that Beering's and Krenitzin's expedition, which alone were undertaken by Imperial authority, reflect considerable honour on the Russian name.

The particulars, which remain to be ascertained with respect to the new-discovered islands, are, to remove the uncertainty arising from the confusion of names, to determine the true number, and to fix the longitude and latitude. And when it is considered that the sea, unexplored by Cook, includes a space of at least ten degrees of latitude, and twenty of longitude, much, in this instance, remains to be effected by the labours of future adventurers.

These are the principal objects of examination on the coasts of Asia and America, and in respect to the new-discovered islands. In order to forward these great ends, the Empress of Russia,

* Vol. II. p. 505.

with that boundless liberality and enlightened spirit which characterises her actions, has planned and commanded a voyage of discovery. The care of this expedition, which was agitated and determined during my second visit to Petersburg in 1785, is committed to Captain Billings, an English naval officer in the Russian service, who is well qualified to conduct such an undertaking, as he accompanied Captain Cook in his last celebrated voyage to the Pacific Ocean. I shall briefly state the plan and purport of this expedition.

According to its first object, Captain Billings is to proceed by Irkutsk, Yakutsk, and Okotsk to Kovimskoi Ostrog: having traced the course of the Kovyma, and settled by astronomical observations the exact position of its mouth, he will endeavour to delineate the coasts extending from that point to Cape North, the utmost period of Cook's navigation on the north eastern shores of Siberia. For this purpose he will embark in such vessels as are usually employed for coasting voyages in the Frozen Ocean; fix the longitude and latitude of the principal parts by astronomical observations; form exact charts of the bays and inlets which he may have occasion to explore; and cause views to be taken of the bearings, head-lands, and remarkable objects on the coast. If he should be prevented by the ice, or any other obstacle, from getting round by sea to Tchukotkoinofs, he must disembark, and endeavour to proceed by land or over the ice, surveying the coast and district of the Tchutski and obtaining an accurate knowledge of their manners, population, and country. In both cases, and in all instances, he is enjoined to abstain from the least degree of violence; is directed to use every effort towards conciliating the affection of the natives; to obtain information and assistance by the gentlest treatment, and a proper distribution of presents; and to confirm them in their de-

dependence and favourable opinion of the Russian government, to which they have recently submitted.

While he continues in these parts, he will not neglect an opportunity of exploring the islands and coasts of America, that may be situated in the Frozen Ocean, or to the north of Beering's straits.

Having attempted to execute these designs, he is to return to Okotk, where two ships of a proper burden for a voyage of discovery, will be prepared for his further embarkation.

He is then to sail and follow the numerous chain of islands which extend to the continent of America; determining their respective longitudes and latitudes by a series of astronomical observations; taking an exact chart of their positions, and particularly noticing those roads and harbours which appear to be most secure. He is also to extend his researches towards such parts of the American coast, which bad weather and other impediments prevented preceding navigators from surveying. And in case his former attempts to determine the coast of the Tchutski from the mouth of the Kovyma to Cape North, and to gain an accurate information of the country, should be ineffectual; he is again ordered to sail towards Tchukotkoi-Nofs, and endeavour to penetrate by sea from Beering's Straits to the mouth of the Kovyma, and to make those observations, and obtain that intelligence of those regions, which he could not procure on the former occasion.

Six years will be requisite for the accomplishment of these various purposes. In order to ensure its success, every possible encouragement, in regard to promotion and rank, as the respective objects are fulfilled, is given to the commander and his followers. No expence has been spared towards procuring

curing such an apparatus and instruments as are necessary for this expedition.

For the purpose also of elucidating the natural history of those distant regions, at present so imperfectly known, the commander is accompanied by Monsieur Patrin, an eminent French naturalist, some time resident at Irkutsk, who is furnished with such excellent instructions as are most calculated to forward the object of his mission.

Captain Billings set out from St. Petersburg on this expedition in the latter end of 1785. He arrived at Irkutsk in March, 1786; and at Okotk in July of the same year, from whence he proposed instantly to take his departure for the Kovyra. It is not indeed improbable, that, before the present period, he may have ascertained the longitude and latitude of the mouth of the Kovyra; and thus have determined one important fact, relative to the precise distance between the Kovyra and Cape North. The length of time requisite for the conveying of intelligence from these distant regions to St. Petersburg, and the difficulty of obtaining certain information from that capital, renders it impossible to gratify the farther curiosity of the reader.

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE reader is requested to correct the longitude of Kamtchatka, mentioned p. 5 of my Russian Discoveries, as lying between 173 and 182 degrees from the isle of Fero; or 155 and 165 from Greenwich. Whereas, by the observations of the English, it is situated between 155 and 169 from Greenwich; or 172 and 186 from Fero; the Russian geographers having laid down the north-eastern part of the peninsula near three degrees too much to the west.

E R R A T A.

P. 242. l. 11. for 1.313.621, &c. read 1.383.621.

P. 344. latitude of Port of St. Peter and Paul, for 35, read 53.

