

' the western coast. First, the bottom of the sea
' is to be seen there at the depth of about eleven
' fathom, which is an evident sign that the wa-
' ter comes from some ocean, as such a transpa-
' rency could not exist in waters discharged from
' rivers, or in melted snow or rain. Secondly,
' the currents keep this place always free from
' ice, while all the rest of the bay is covered
' with it; and their violence cannot be account-
' ed for but by supposing them to come from
' some western sea. Lastly, the whales, who
' towards the latter end of autumn always go in
' search of the warmest climates, are found in
' great abundance in these parts towards the end
' of summer, which would seem to indicate that
' there is an outlet for them from thence to the
' south seas, not to the northern ocean.

' It is probable that the passage is very short.
' All the rivers that empty themselves on the
' western coast of Hudson's Bay are small and
' slow, which seems to prove that they do not
' come from any distance; and that consequently
' the lands which separate the two seas are of a
' small extent. This argument is strengthened
' by the height and regularity of the tides.
' Wherever there is no other difference between
' the times of the ebb and flow, but that which
' is occasioned by the retarded progression of
' the moon in her return to the meridian, it is
' a certain sign that the ocean from whence

' those tides come is very near. If the passage
' is short, and not very far to the north, as every
' thing seems to promise, we may also pre-
' sume that it is not very difficult. The rapidi-
' ty of the currents observable in these latitudes,
' which prevents any flakes of ice from continu-
' ing there, cannot but give some weight to this
' conjecture.'

I believe, with this excellent writer, that if
a practicable passage exists, it must be at the
bottom of Hudson's Bay, and that all attempts
by Baffin's Bay will be fruitless, because the cli-
mate is too cold, and its coasts are always frozen,
especially towards the north. But the exist-
ence of this passage is rendered still more
doubtful by the lands discovered, in 1741, by
Bering and Tchirikow, under the same latitude
with Hudson's Bay; for these lands seem to
form a part of the great Continent of America,
which appears to stretch under the same lati-
tude as far as the Polar Circle. Of course, the
passage into the South Sea can only be found
about the 55th degree of north latitude.

IV.

Of the Caspian Sea, vol. i. p. 327.

TO what was advanced in order to prove,
that the Caspian Sea is only a lake, and never

had any communication with the ocean, I have to add the answers I received from the Academy of Petersburg to some queries I transmitted them concerning this sea.

'Augusto 1748, October 5, &c. Cancellaria Academiae Scientiarum mandavit, ut Astrachanensis Gubernii Cancellaria responderet ad sequentia. 1. Suntne vortices in mari Caspico necne? 2. Quae genera piscium illud inhabitant! Quomodo appellantur! Et an marini tantum aut et fluviatiles ibidem reperiantur! 3. Qualia genera concharum! Quae species ostrearum et cancerorum occurrunt! 4. Quae genera marinarum avium in ipso mari aut circa illud versantur! ad quae Astrachenfis Cancellaria d. 13. Mart. 1749, sequentibus respondit.

'Ad 1. in mari Caspico vortices occurrunt nusquam; hinc est quod nec in mappis marinis extant, nec ab ullo officialium rei navalis visi esse perhibentur.

'Ad 2. pisces Caspinum mare inhabitant; Acipenser, Sturioli, Gmel, Siruli Cyprini clavati, Brama, Perca, Cyprini ventre acuto, ignoti alibi pisces, tincae, salmones, qui, ut e mari fluviis intrare, ita et in mare e fluviis remeare solent;

'Ad 3. conchae in littoribus maris obvise quidem sunt, sed parvae, candidae, aut ex una parte rubrae. Cancræ ad littora observantur magni-

'magnitudine fluviatilibus similes; ostreae autem et capita Medusae visa sunt nusquam.

'Ad 4. aves marinae quae circa mare Caspium versantur sunt anseres vulgares et rubri, pellicani, cygni, anates rubrae et nigricantes, aquilae, corvi aquatici, grues, plateae, ardeae albae, cinereae, et nigricantes, ciconiae albae gruibus similes, Karawaiki (ignotum avis nomen) larorum variae species, sturni nigri et lateribus albis instar picarum, physiani, anseres parvi nigricantes, Tudaki (ignotum avis nomen) albo colore praediti.

These facts, which are both accurate and authentic, confirm my position, that the Caspian Sea has no subterraneous communication with the ocean. They prove farther, that this sea never formed a part of the ocean; for it contains neither oysters nor any other sea-shells, but such species only as are found in rivers. We are, therefore, warranted to conclude, that this sea is nothing but a great lake formed by the waters of rivers, since we find in it the same fishes and the same shells which inhabit the rivers, and none of those which people the ocean, or the Mediterranean.