

III.

Of the Terra Australis, p. 140.

TO what I have said concerning the Terra Australis, I shall add, that, within these few years, new attempts have been made to discover it, and that some points of it have been found after departing either from the Cape of Good Hope, or from the Isle of France; but that these new voyagers have uniformly met with thick fogs, snow, and ice, in the 46th or 47th degree of South latitude. After conversing with some of these voyagers, and collecting all the information I could derive from other sources, I perceived that they all agreed with regard to this fact, and that they found ice in much lower latitudes than is to be met with in the northern hemisphere. They likewise uniformly met with fogs in the same latitudes where they found ice, though it was summer in these climates at the time the experiments were made. It is, therefore, extremely probable, that, below the 50th degree, it will be in vain to search for temperate countries in the southern hemisphere, where the freezing cold is much farther extended than in the northern. The thick fog is produced by the presence or neighbourhood of the ice. This
fog

fog consists of minute particles of snow, which are suspended in the air, and render it obscure: It often accompanies the great floating masses of ice, and reigns perpetually in frozen regions.

Besides, the British have lately sailed round New Holland as well as New Zealand. These southern countries are more extensive than the whole of Europe. New Zealand is divided into several islands; but New Holland ought rather to be regarded as a part of Asia, than as an island belonging to the Southern Continent; for New Holland is only separated from the land of the Papous, or New Guiney, by a narrow strait, and the whole Archipelago, which extend southward from the Philippine isles, as far as the country of Arnheim in New Holland, and toward the west and south, as far Sumatra and Java, appears to belong as much to the Continent of New Holland, as to the southern parts of Asia.

Captain Cook, who ought to be regarded as the greatest navigator of this age, and to whom we are indebted for an infinite number of new discoveries, has not only given a chart of the coasts of Zealand and New Holland, but has likewise explored an immense tract of the south sea in the neighbourhood of America. He departed from the south point of America on the 30th of January 1769, and he traversed a great part of the ocean under the 60th degree, without discovering any land. From Captain Cook's chart

we may perceive the great extent of sea which he explored; and his tract demonstrates, that, if any lands exist in this part of the globe, they must be far removed from the Continent of America; for New Zealand, which is situated between the 35th and 45th degrees, is very distant from America. But it is still to be hoped, that other navigators, following the tract of Captain Cook, will traverse the southern ocean under the 50th degree, and that they will discover whether these immense regions, which extend more than two thousand leagues, consist of land or of sea. However, I do not imagine that the southern regions, beyond the 50th degree, are so temperate that any advantage could be derived to us from the discovery of them.

IV.

Concerning the Invention of the Mariner's Compass, p. 153.

WITH regard to the invention of the Mariner's Compass, I have to add, that, from the testimony of Chinese authors, of which M. le Roufe and M. de Guignes have made an abridgment, it appears to be certain, that the polarity of the magnetic needle has been very anciently known to the inhabitants of China. The figure of these

first compasses was those of a man, who turned upon a pivot, and whose right arm pointed to the south. The time of this invention, according to certain Chinese chronicles, was 1115 years before the Christian æra, and, according to others, 2700*. But notwithstanding the antiquity of this discovery, it does not appear that the Chinese had ever derived from it the advantage of making long voyages.

Homer, in the *Odyssey*, tells us, that the Greeks employed the loadstone to direct their navigation when they went to besiege Troy; and this æra is nearly the same with that recorded in the Chinese Chronicle. Hence we can no longer doubt, that the direction of the loadstone toward the pole, and even the use of the mariner's compass in navigation, were known to the ancients at least three thousand years ago.

V.

Of the discovery of America, p. 155.

To what I said, p. 155. concerning the discovery of America, a critic of more judgment than the author of *Lettres à un Américain*, has accused me of doing a kind of injury to the memory of so great a man as Christopher Colum-

* See l'Extrait des Annales de la China, par Mrs. Roufe and de Guignes.