

ancients had no conception of the extent of this circumference, although they had thought much upon the subject. The trade winds, so useful in long voyages, were also unknown to them; therefore we must not be surprised at the little progress they made in geography, since even the knowledge we have acquired by the aid of mathematical sciences, and the discovery of navigators, has yet left many things unsettled, and vast countries undiscovered. Almost all the land on the side of the antarctic pole is unknown to us; we only know that there is some, and that it is separated from all the other continents by the ocean. Much land also remains to be discovered on the side of the Arctic pole, and it must be confessed with regret, that for more than a century the ardour for discovering new countries is extremely abated*. European governments seem to prefer, and possibly with reason, increasing the value of those countries we are acquainted with to the glory of conquering new ones.

Nevertheless, the discovery of the southern continent would be a great object of curiosity.

* This complaint no longer exists: in no period has the spirit of discovery been more enterprisingly enforced than in the present: the vast increase of knowledge which has been effected by the travels of Browne, Mungo Parke, Mackenzie, Barrow, &c. &c. and the impetus which has been thus given to the ardour of curiosity, leave every thing to hope as to the perfection of knowledge in this particular.

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