

in the open seas? For a few years after the discovery of this wonderful property of the loadstone, the Portuguese doubled the Cape of Good Hope, traversed the African and Indian seas, and Christopher Columbus made his voyage to America.

By a little consideration, it was easy to divine there were immense spaces towards the west; for, by comparing the known part of the globe, as for example, the distance of Spain to China, and attending to the revolution of the Earth and Heavens, it was easy to see that there remained a much greater extent towards the west to be discovered, than what they were acquainted with towards the east. It, therefore, was not from the defect of astronomical knowledge that the ancients did not find the new world, but only for want of the compass. The passages of Plato and Aristotle, where they speak of countries far distant from the Pillars of Hercules, seem to indicate that some navigators had been driven by tempest as far as America, from whence they returned with much difficulty; and it may be conjectured, that if even the ancients had been persuaded of the existence of this continent, they would not have even thought it possible to strike out
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