

voyages to Greenland, related to King Charles II. that two Dutch vessels with which he had sailed, having found no whales on the coast of the island of Edges, resolved to proceed farther north, and that upon their return at the expiration of fifteen days, they told him that they had been as far as 89 degrees latitude (within one degree of the pole), and that they found no ice there, but an open deep sea like that of the Bay of Biscay, and that they shewed him the journals of the two vessels, as a proof of what they affirmed. In short, it is related in the Philosophical Transactions that two navigators, who had undertaken the discovery of this passage, shaped a course 300 leagues to the east of Nova Zembla, but that the East India Company, who thought it their interest this passage should not be discovered, hindered them from returning*. But the Dutch East India Company thought, on the contrary, that it was their interest to find this passage; having attempted it in vain on the side of Europe, they sought it by that of Japan, and they would probably have succeeded, if the Emperor of Japan had not forbidden all strangers from navigating on the side of the land of Jesso. This passage, therefore, cannot

* See the collection of Northern Voyages, page 200.