

dispositions obtain the same effect, and see vessels from land, as far, perhaps, as the curvature of the earth would permit. We have already observed that persons whose sight was very good, have perceived objects illumined by the sun at more than 3400 times their diameter, and at the same time we have remarked, that the intermediate light was of such great hurt to that of distant objects, that by night a luminous object is perceived at ten, twenty, and perhaps a hundred times greater distance than during the day. We know that at the bottom of very deep pits, stars may be seen in the daytime\* ; why therefore should we not see vessels illumined by the rays of the sun, by placing one's self at the end of a very long dark gallery, situated on the sea shore, in such a manner as to receive no other than that of the distant sea, and the vessels which might be on it? This gallery would be only a horizontal pit, which would have the same effect with respect to ships as the vertical pit has with respect to the stars; and it appears to me so simple, that I am astonished it has never before been thought of and tried. It seems to me, that by taking the time of the day for our

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\* Aristotle is, I believe, the first that ever mentioned this observation.