

ACCOUNT  
OF A LATE  
VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

TO THE  
Strait of Magellan.

**T**HE King of Spain, having some time ago resolved to dispatch a vessel, for the purpose of examining and making an accurate draught of the Strait of Magellan, in South America, orders were given to the general of the fleet to select a frigate for the enterprize, who, in consequence, made choice of the Santa Maria de la Cabeza of thirty-six guns, whose good qualities were already well known. For several reasons, it was thought proper that she should not be sheathed with copper. She was built on the modern French model; which, it was believed, could not fail to render her fit for any kind of navigation; and the experience of this voyage confirmed that opinion: as her good qualities, on many occasions, delivered the officers and men from dangers, to all appearance inevitable.

The chief command of the frigate, and of the whole expedition, was conferred on Don Antonio de Cordova, of the Royal Navy, with leave for him to choose his officers, seamen, and marines; as also to carry out a second captain and two other officers, particularly conversant with astronomical observations.

In consequence of this permission, the commander made choice of Don Ferdinand de Miera to be his second captain; and it happened fortunately that Brigadier Don Vincent Tofiño was at that time in Cadiz, together with the officers of that department of the Spanish navy, who for two years past had been employed in the construction of a hydrographic atlas, or sea-chart, and coasting-pilot, of Spain: he requested to have two of these gentlemen, who, being thoroughly instructed in astronomical observations, and expert in the use of all the instruments necessary for this expedition, might assist him in the execution of his commission.

VOYAGES and TRAVELS, No. 5, Vol. II.

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