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ARCTIC DISCOVERIES

THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

BY GORE.

"It is the only thing in the world that is left yet undone, whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate."—*Sir Martin Trobisher.*

SINCE Columbus pointed the road to this western world, in his search for the Indies, mankind has been almost constantly seeking another and a shorter route to those regions than that presented to them by the discoveries of Diaz.

The various voyages of the early Spanish navigators, companions or disciples of the great Genoese, soon proved the hopelessness of that expectation by any intertropical course; but the north and south being yet open, thither the spirit of adventure directed many a bold and skilful seaman, but difficulty and peril were wrestled with in vain, one disappointment succeeded another—that langour which precedes the abandonment of any pursuit was evidently checking enterprise, when Balboa, gazing on the broad Pacific, renewed at once the hope and the daring necessary to success.

The firmness of Magalhaens opened in truth a new path to the East, but one longer, wilder, and more perilous even, than that by the strange ocean washing the Cape of Storms.—Success and failure in this, the only fortunate essay, were indeed so nearly equal, as to leave little encouragement to pursue the same course hereafter. Balboa saw the sea in or about Panama, in 1513, and the vessel that bore the fiery Portuguese, in less than seven years after, was tossing on its unknown wilderness of waters. But long before this, even as early as 1463, John Vas Costa Cortereal,* a gentleman of the

* It is not exactly true that no memorial of the fate of the Cortreal's was ever recovered. Cartier, when in the St. Lawrence, heard of certain white men in the interior, who wore woollen garments, and if our memory serves us truly, money of the date of the wreck of these vessels, has likewise been found in circumstances that would go far to prove its connection with them.