

P. S. *Wednesday*, 1st November, we are at last all safe in Lerwick bay, in Shetland; but no tidings of the *Hecla*. She may however, knowing the trim of our vessel, have kept out to sea, in the hope of again falling in with us. At any rate we shall wait the appointed time for her appearance, and then turn our heads to the southward. This is probably, therefore, the last letter which you can have from me before I have the happiness to see our excellent mother, Mary, and you, all well and comfortable in London. The occurrences of our run from Davis's Strait to these, the most northern of the Britannic Isles, in which was nothing remarkable, must, therefore, be reserved for verbal communication.

Farewell,
&c &c.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

THE discovery of a communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, to the northward of the American continent, has been long an object of curiosity and enterprise. When the New World beyond the Atlantic was made known to Europeans, by the expedition of Columbus; when by the fortunate passage of Magellan through the dangerous strait of his name, it was seen that a communication existed towards the southern extremity of the new continent; that a corresponding communication also existed towards its northern extremity, it was very reasonable to conclude. Access to the treasures of India and China by the southern parts of the globe, was discovered and appropriated by Spain and Portugal. Similar access by the northern parts seemed naturally to belong to the British and other northern nations of Europe.

Such a passage by the North American coast was asserted to have been effected by Cortereal, a Portuguese, in 1500. Having visited Newfoundland, he passed over to the continent on the north of the great river St. Laurence, where, observing the country fitted for agriculture, he called it *Terra de Labrador*. Coasting still farther northward, he came to a spacious inlet running westward, and concluded he had discovered the passage so much desired. This strait he named that of Anian, probably because he conceived it to be the eastern opening of the strait so called, of which the western opening into the Pacific already bore that