

might pass from the south sea to the ocean on the other side, and thus shorten the route by more than fifteen hundred leagues;¹ and from Panama to the Straits of Magellan, would be an island, and from Panama to the New-found-lands would be another island, so that the whole of America would be in two islands.

If an enemy of the king of Spain should hold the said Porto-bello, he could prevent any thing leaving Peru, except with great difficulty and risk, and at more expense than profit. Drac² went to the said Porto-bello, in order to surprise it, but he failed in his enterprise, having been discovered; in consequence of which, he died from disappointment, and ordered, in dying, that they should put him in a coffin of lead, and throw him into the sea, between an island and the said Porto-bello.

Having remained a month at the said Porto-bello, I re-

¹ Isthmus of Panama. The junction of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, through the Isthmus of Panama, is not therefore by any means a modern idea. Champlain has, perhaps, the merit of being the first to promulgate it.

² Sir Francis Drake, after his unsuccessful attempt on Porto-rico, pursued his voyage to Nombre-de-Dios, where, having landed his men, he attempted to pass forward to Panama with a view of plundering that place, or if he found such a scheme practicable, of keeping and fortifying it, but he met not with the same facility which had attended his first enterprises in those parts. The Spaniards had fortified the passes, and stationed troops in the woods, who so infested the English with continual alarms and skirmishes, that they were obliged to return without effecting anything. Drake himself, from the intemperance of the climate, the fatigues of his journey and the vexation of his disappointment, was seized with a distemper of which he soon after died. (See Hume's "Hist. of England," ann. 1597. Drake died on the 30th of December, 1596, old style, (9th of January, 1597, MS.,) and his body was disposed of in the manner mentioned by Champlain.