

Vespucius had no share in the first discovery of America, and that by error the new continent received the name it bears. Vespucius' account of his voyage and discoveries is not remarkable for the modesty with which it is written. It was published at St. Dié, in Lorraine; by a clerical error it was stated that Vespucius preceded Columbus in reaching the mainland, and as the proposition that the continent should be named after the first discoverer was generally accepted, the new continent received the name of "America." No one at the time recognised the error, and the name of America has continued in use. That the name of Columbus or Cabot was not given to the newly discovered continent presents one of the many facts to show how chance governs much of our history.

The desire to recognise Columbus as the first discoverer of America has led some to deny John Cabot's first voyage in 1497. They have gone so far as to refuse to believe even in his existence, and claim that the first voyage made by anyone bearing the name of Cabot was the second voyage of his son, Sebastian Cabot, in 1498, and that his landfall was Labrador. No conscientious writer can now maintain that view; the whole subject has been minutely examined by a learned member of the Royal Society of Canada, Dr. S. E. Dawson, and I append his closing remark:

Upon that easternmost point of this Nova Scotian land of our common country John Cabot planted the banner of St. George on June 24, 1497, more than one year before Columbus set foot upon the main continent of America; and now, after almost 400 years, despite all the chances and changes of this Western world, that banner is floating there, a witness to our existing union with our distant mother land across the ocean. May the *cavo descubierta por Ingleses* ever be thus adorned; and meantime, when in 1897 St. John the Baptist's day arrives, what shall Canadians do to commemorate the fourth centenary of that auspicious day when the red cross was planted on the mainland across the western sea, and when on a point of land in our own Dominion the English tongue was heard, of all the languages of Europe the first, upon this great continent—from the desolate shores of the Arctic Ocean on the north to the silent wastes of the Antarctic on the south?

We claim, consequently, that Cabot's voyage of 1497 takes precedence of every recorded voyage between the two continents in the northern hemisphere, and that the frail craft "The Matthew," with a crew of eighteen Bristol sailors, may be viewed as the forerunner, the primitive embryo, of the magnificent fleets of ships that now traverse the ocean with so much regularity between the Old and New Worlds.