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mainland. After the death of Columbus, which occurred in 1506, the statements of Amerigo Vespucci led people to confer the name America on the new continent.

About the year 1498, a considerable part of the North American coast was explored by John Cabot and his son Sebastian. These navigators, who came from Venice to settle in England, sailed in the service of King Henry VII. They discovered Newfoundland and the island of St. John, since named Prince Edward's Isle. Next, Gaspard Cortereal, a Portuguese, was the discoverer of Labrador and Greenland, about the year 1500.

Some time later the French took part in following up these discoveries in the Western Hemisphere. John Verrazzani, another Florentine, commissioned by the King of France, explored the coast from Carolina to Nova Scotia, in 1524. According to the fashion of the day,* he claimed the coast and all the region lying beyond, as possessions of the French King. He gave to them the name of New-France—a name which, as we shall see in the course of this history, was afterwards applied to most of the territory claimed to belong to France in the new world.

While the discoveries which have been mentioned, were being made, the shallow parts of the ocean in the neighborhood of the coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia—commonly called the Banks of Newfoundland—were frequented by the fishing vessels of the various European nations. Every season the French, Dutch, English, and others, came thither to carry on the cod-fisheries, which have afforded, from that period to the present, such an abundant supply for the use of mankind. It is thought that the bold mariners who were engaged in that occupation must have often visited, or been driven by storms upon, the coasts of the neigh-

* The mode of taking possession of a newly discovered country then consisted in erecting crosses, with inscriptions upon them, amidst religious ceremonies, the discharge of fire-arms, etc. The natives were forbidden by signs to meddle with these marks of European sovereignty.