

The Romans, who spoke Latin, had names for the winds. They called the south wind "Auster," and from that we get "Australia," which means "the southland," or "land of the south wind."

Many people wonder why this great western continent should not have been called Columbia, and that would have been a very excellent name for this vast "new world." But we must remember that when this land was discovered reading and writing were not so common as they are today. Columbus was a scholar, but he was too busy exploring to bother writing about his travels. An Italian named Amerigo Vespucci visited the new world and wrote a book describing what he had seen. When people read his writings they spoke of the new land as Amerigo's land or "America."

Before leaving the names of the continents let us refer to something which a bright boy discovered in connection with the name of our land, "America." Historians tell us that fully five hundred years before Columbus made his great discovery a man called Eric sailed westward from Iceland and discovered Greenland, which is, of course, considered as belonging to our great continent. Eric's son, with a band of adventurers, sailed southward and visited the mainland. Now some people say that this "new world" should be named after Eric. Our bright boy says it has been done, "For," says he, "look straight at America and you will see Eric."

Before discussing the names of the oceans, let us consider the name of that "great sea" which is almost an ocean. For a long time—thousands of years—the people living around that big body of water which touches Europe, Asia and Africa, knew very little about the rest of the earth; in fact they considered that all the earth was around that sea and it formed the centre. In the Latin language there is a word "medius," meaning "the middle," and a word "terra," meaning "the land or earth," and from these we get "Mediterranean."

In the north of Africa, and near the big ocean which lies between that continent and America, is a range of mountains called the Atlas Mountains. The Roman people named that big ocean after these mountains, and the Latin name was "Oceanus Atlanticus." In English it is called "Atlantic Ocean."

Up in the northern sky is a group of seven stars often called "the big dipper." The Greeks and Romans called it "the great bear." The Greek word for "bear" was "arktes." So, the northern ocean, being under "the big bear," was called in the Greek, "Arktikos"; in Latin, "Arcticus," and in English "Arctic." The Latin word "anti" means "opposite." From this anyone can easily see why the great ocean near the South Pole is called "Antarctic."

When Magellan and his sailors went "around the world" in about three years (1519-1522), they sailed westward from Portugal and went around the south end of America. There they had to face terrible storms, but when they came to the immense ocean on the west side and found it very quiet and calm, they at once named it the "Peaceful Ocean" or "Pacific Ocean."