

great river must flow through a country of immense extent; and he landed in several places on the coast of the continent now called Paria. He then returned to Hispaniola or St. Domingo: and in October, 1500, was sent back to Spain in chains!

1499. Ojeda, an officer who had accompanied Colon in his second voyage, sails to America with four ships, but discovered little more than Colon had done. One of the adventurers was Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine man of science, eminently skilled in navigation, who perhaps acted as chief pilot, an office on such expeditions of high account, and probably only inferior to that of commodore. On his return, Amerigo published the first description that had yet appeared of any part of the new continent: and the caprice of fame has assigned to him an honour above the renown of the greatest conquerors, that of indelibly impressing his name upon this vast portion of the earth. It is idle to accuse his vanity, which never could have established such a claim: it was, on the contrary, the ignorant and thoughtless gratitude of others, which alone could have imposed the appellation, from regard to the first man of letters who had disclosed this discovery to the general eye, as it seems before to have been concealed by jealousy and intrigue; and the name is, at any rate, better than that of New Holland, or New South Wales, assigned in our own most enlightened times: nor do we esteem it any want of gratitude to Cook that no land has yet received its denomination from his name. As the titles of the three other quarters of the world spread, by mere accident, from small districts, so when the name of America was imposed there was not the most distant idea of the prodigious extent of the territory; and it was only understood that this appellation was given to a large island. If any continent were adjacent, it was understood to be the large land of India.*

1500. On his voyage to the East Indies Cabral, the Portuguese admiral, discovers Brazil. This undesigned discovery evinces that, independently of the sagacity of Colon, America could no longer have remained in obscurity.

* In September, 1499, Gama returned to Lisbon, after having visited India by the Cape of Good Hope: on which voyage he sailed July 1497.