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## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY COLUMBUS.—AMERIGO VESPUCCI.—  
CORTEREAL.—VERRAZZANI.—FISHERIES OF NEWFOUNDLAND.  
—JACQUES CARTIER.—CANADA DISCOVERED.—THE NATIVES  
OF NORTH AMERICA. (A. D. 1492-1534.)

WE shall find it useful to introduce the History of Canada by a short statement of what was going on in the world just before the existence of this country came to be known.

A very great event had occurred in 1492—the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Before that time, although some persons may have imagined lands existing in the Western Hemisphere, none had been bold enough to strike out far into the ocean, westwards. In fact, the attention of merchants and navigators had been confined to shorter voyages, along the shores of the Mediterranean, and to the eastern coasts and islands of Africa.

It was the custom in those days—that is, in the latter half of the fifteenth century—for the mariners of Italy, England and France, to flock to Lisbon for employment in the service of the Portuguese. The people of Portugal were then famous for the skill and courage of their seamen, who had made voyages to distant parts of the African coast, trading with the natives and carrying back to their own country, gold and other valuable things. The success of the Portuguese was made known to the people of those other European nations. Thus seamen belonging to Italy, England and France, obtained better means than before of improving in the skill and knowledge required in their occupation.

In the course of the last quarter of that century, when improvements in navigation, and a more correct knowledge of the earth's shape, had prepared the way,