

new continent interposed itself, which up to 1524, had been found continuous from Florida to the distant southern strait discovered by Magellan.

In 1513, Balboa discovered the South Sea, thus revealing a probable division of the New World into a southern and a northern continent, which last was, however, supposed to be a part of Asia until 1540. The South Sea was thus named, because it was supposed to lie to the south of this eastern extremity of Asia, and on many maps of the time, it was thus represented. The probability, however, of the existence of a narrow strait or water communication between the South Sea and the Atlantic, just north of Mexico, was a favorite theory among geographers, long believed in, leading to many voyages for its detection, and which, as a search for a north-west passage, survived to this day, when having been found, it turns out to be impracticable.

It was the hope of making such a discovery that impelled the navigator, whose voyage we are about to examine, toward that part of the New World which still remained unexplored, and we shall briefly review the geographical discoveries which, up to the year 1524, had been made from the north and from the south, along the coast of the present United States of America.

In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon discovered the mainland of Florida, and afterwards sent out exploring expeditions along its Atlantic coast, which do not appear to have got beyond the mouth of the Rio de Chicora, or Savannah River, in latitude  $32^{\circ}$ . He died in 1521 from a wound received on his last voyage while fighting with the natives.

The Licentiate, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, in 1520 and 1521, explored the coast north of the Savannah, and appears to have reached Cabo Santa Helena, or Cape Fear, in latitude  $34^{\circ}$ , and somewhat beyond it. It is claimed by some that his vessels had reached to the Bahia Santa Maria, or Chesapeake Bay, before 1526, the date of his last expedition. The coast-line of the Gulf of Mexico