

## DISCOVERY OF NORTH AMERICA.

---

THE discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492 may be considered as the greatest event of modern times ; but to him and his associates, as well as to all the cosmographers of his time, it was only a discovery of the eastern coast of Asia and the adjacent islands. And so Columbus lived and died, with but faint idea of the immense value to the world of what his genius and enterprise had accomplished. The news of his great discovery soon spread throughout Europe, to the wonder of every nation ; and to those who had refused to listen to his plans, or had declined to aid him in carrying them out, it must have brought feelings of bitter regret.

It is natural to suppose that a jealousy of Spain, which thus suddenly had become possessed of immense domains, should be immediately felt, particularly by Portugal and by England, each of whom had thus lost the opportunity of becoming the leading nation of the world. This feeling undoubtedly stimulated them to attempt enterprises which, a few years earlier, they would not have entertained for a moment.

England was not at this period a leading power in Europe. With a population hardly greater than the London of our day, it ranked in commerce below Portugal, and its limited navigation and trade were mostly in the hands of foreigners.

Henry the Seventh was then on the throne ; and though he had listened to the projects of Columbus, he had refused to aid in the proposed voyage of discovery. But when he heard the good for-