

America and westward—although this latter was not prosecuted to any great extent as a commercial highway. It must be carefully noted that each of these nations monopolised its own route, and treated as pirates any navigators not belonging to their respective nations, who attempted to pass by either route for the purpose of discovery or trade.

*Both routes were thus closed to England.*

But the astounding discovery of Columbus had aroused, as with an electric shock, the ambition and the energies of all maritime powers, and, as might be expected, England, the chosen home of the old sea-rovers of the north, was fully alive to the quick-coming changes of the time, and to the *vast advantages of a monopoly of some sea-passage to the East*. But where was such a route to be found?