

When Vasco da Gama discovered the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese, following this route, founded for the purpose of gain and commerce colonies in the East Indies and Brazil. This last declared its independence in 1822. Shortly afterwards, on the annexation of Portugal to Spain, most of her colonies became Spanish possessions. The Portuguese colonies were dependencies of their Mother Country.

Spain's era of colonization began with the discovery of America in 1492, when on the Island of Haiti was established a colony by Columbus. Soon Spain owned almost all South America, West Indies, and Philippine Islands. Enriched by these countries she became the wealthiest nation of Europe. She established her colonies first to promulgate Christianity, but in the end her subjects were so oppressed that they rebelled, and one by one the dependencies broke away from her government. Spain, once the mistress of the seas, is now of no colonial importance.

The supremacy of the seas now passed to the Dutch, who in 1595 had taken most of Spain's Indian possessions. The discovery of New Zealand and surrounding lands is due to them. Several colonies were founded in South America, and about the middle of the seventeenth century Holland's power was at its zenith. New Netherlands, their only possession in North America, was taken by the English in 1664. The purpose of the Dutch in colonizing was the promotion of their commerce, and trading companies had the sole government of their settlements. Holland's importance as a naval and colonial power declined with her commerce, although she retains numerous colonies in the East and West Indies.

Denmark, Germany, Austria, and Sweden never accomplished anything important in the way of colonization. For commercial interests, Denmark owns possessions in the West Indies and has trading-posts in Greenland and Iceland.

France, under the policy of colonization and naval enterprise introduced by Richelieu and Colbert, began her colonial career. She obtained possession of Canada, Acadia, Newfoundland and minor territories in the New World where settlements were planted under such leaders as Champlain and Cartier. Although seeking to promote her commerce the principal object France had in founding colonies was the promotion of the Christian religion, for as Champlain said, "To save one soul is of more importance than to found a new empire."

The French possessions in the East too, were flourishing, but