
THE QUEBEC MAGAZINE

FOR SEPTEMBER 1792.



Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci.

The questions examined whether he or Columbus landed first on the Continent of America, and whether he was Commander or only a passenger in the Fleet—the means by which he was enabled to give his name to the New World. Being a sequel of the life and voyages of Columbus in our last; from Tiraboschi's History of Italian Literature.

A BOUT the year 1490, Amerigo was sent by Nastagio, his father, to exercise commerce in Spain. The Canon Bandini therefore thinks, that before this voyage he had made many others, in order to prepare himself for the discovery of the new world. He produces, as a proof of it, the Poem, entitled America, by Girolamo Bartolommei; in which Amerigo is introduced to relate to the King of Ethiopia, the voyages he had made to England and Ireland; attempting, at the same time, to advance still farther, but the sea being frozen, compelled him to turn back. But to speak truth, I could wish, that for proof of such voyages, better authority could be offered than that of a writer, who lived in the middle of the xviiith century, and moreover a poet. Amerigo being arrived at Seville, whilst he remained there employed in commerce, heard of the Islands discovered by Columbus, and likewise wished to share the glory to which he perceived Columbus was raised; and he finally obtained it, as he also was appointed by King Ferdinand to continue the discovery of the new world.

But here two very intricate points present themselves to us for examination, concerning which much has been written by many, but nothing hitherto ascertained, so as to remove every doubt. I am very far from engaging as arbitrator in such disputes; and, were I even willing, I could not have the number of monuments which would be requisite for a decision. I shall lay down the arguments that are brought forward by the different parties; and shall candidly say which of them appears to me to be the best founded, leaving every one to judge as he likes. There are two circumstances in particular, on which they dispute. The first is, whether Amerigo was the foremost in discovering terra firma in America, or whether Columbus preceded—