

to transact with America was far from being so productive; this continent had but few inhabitants, and these, for the most part, were uncivilized, unmindful of agriculture and scarcely possessing any manufactures worthy of the name. Besides the Spaniards greedy for gold and silver forced the natives to work in the mines and neglected the tillage of these fertile countries.

So matters stood for a short time after the great eastern and western discoveries, and history tells us the important changes that followed both in Asia and America. But let us return to our main argument.

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The Portuguese, always in search of new countries, discovered Japan in 1543 and are said to have landed on the northern coasts of Australia as early as in 1540; but little was known of this fifth continent, until Tasman and especially Cook explored its coasts and found it sparingly inhabited by cannibal savages. The Dutch Tasman landed on it 1607, and in 1642 discovered Tasmania, named by him Van Diemen's Land in honour of his patron, the governor of the Dutch possessions in India; he also explored in the same year New Zealand under the direction of the Dutch East India Company.

The celebrated captain James Cook, born at Marton in Yorkshire 27th October 1728, made three exploratory voyages round the world; during the first, which lasted from the 26th April 1768 to the 11th June 1771, he visited Australia or New Holland, and discovered the now called Cook's Strait between the two main islands of New Zealand, as well as the passage between Cape York of Australia and New Guinea or Papua. On his second tour, between July 1772 and July 1775, he reached, after encountering enormous difficulties