

he thought he had landed on islands near the eastern coast of the fabled India of Asia, which he had set out to find.

10. There was great surprise when Columbus returned, for no person in Spain expected to see him or his companions again. But when nobles and merchants heard of the beautiful islands he had found, of the strange people he had seen, and above all of the gold to be had across the Atlantic, surprise gave way to eagerness to go there themselves, and it was not many years before the Spaniards had spread over much of South and Central America. In these regions were **rich mines** of gold and silver, which led that nation to claim possession of them. In the more northern parts they did not discover the precious metals, so were not anxious to settle the country, and thus all north of Mexico and Florida was left to be explored by the other nations of Europe.

11. Of these, **England** was the first to explore the coasts of America. In 1497, King Henry VII. sent out **John Cabot**, a merchant of Bristol, to make discoveries. This man arrived off the coast of Newfoundland, which he was the first to see. In the next year his son, **Sebastian**, visited all the coast from Labrador to Florida, and claimed it in the name of England. But England was then disturbed by civil war, arising out of the rebellion of Perkin Warbeck, and was not able to follow up the advantage of her prior discoveries in the region about the St. Lawrence, and thus lost her chance of peaceably possessing what she afterwards acquired by conquest.

12. **France** was the nation which ranked next in projects of discovery. As early as 1506, French vessels came to the Banks of Newfoundland for the purpose of fishing for the cod and whale, which were highly prized in Europe. They also tried to settle the adjoining coasts, but these