

visited during the sixteenth century; isolated points of the island-continent which was soon to receive the name of New Holland or Australia were seen, but out of the immense number of scattered Polynesian islands very few had been discovered, and their identification was most uncertain.

GEOGRAPHICAL  
DISCOVERIES OF  
THE SEVENTEENTH  
AND EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURIES.

The geographical work of the sixteenth century was continued, but with less vigour, during the seventeenth century. The only considerable result of the investigations made in the Great Ocean during the seventeenth century was the discovery by the Dutch navy of the western half of New Holland, from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north to about the middle of the south coast. Abel Tasman in 1642 showed that Australia and Van Diemens Land were surrounded by the ocean to the south, but the west coast of New Zealand, which he visited, was believed to be a part of the Great Southern Continent.

In the north, hydrographic explorations were continued, always with a view of discovering a shorter route to India. Hudson, in his last voyage in 1610, found near the 60th parallel the strait now bearing his name; the current coming from the west made him suspect the existence of a great inner sea, which was explored by himself, and in the following years (1612-1613) by Thomas Button. William Baffin (1616) hugged the western coast of Greenland as far as lat. 74° N., about 1½ degrees higher than the spot reached by Davis, and, continuing to sail northwards in an open sea, he reached the strait which he named Smith's Sound, in lat. 78° N. He was unable to proceed further in this direction. Turning south-west, he discovered on the coast, in lat. 74° to 76° N., two wide openings, Jones' Sound and Lancaster Sound, the latter of which has played an important part in modern explorations. The name of Baffin's Bay has deservedly been retained for the enclosed sea to which Davis' Strait leads, and into which open important passages to the Polar Sea.

In the middle of the seventeenth century the relations of land and water had been observed directly on two-thirds of the earth's surface. In the Pacific, the Sandwich Islands, the Society Islands, the principal islands of the Navigator Archipelago, and the Viti Islands had been discovered, while the Marquesas, Santa Cruz Islands, and the New Hebrides had been discovered but lost sight of. The explorations in southern latitudes were less numerous, and many people still believed in the existence of a vast continent surrounding the South Pole, and extending into low latitudes. Half of the south-eastern coast of Australia was not yet known.

When, in 1728, the Russian expedition under Bering passed through the straits which bear his name, the discovery of the continent of America may be said to have been completed, and the new world stood revealed in its broad and general outlines. Bering made further explorations in the same direction, but after the numerous voyages in the preceding centuries the absence of discoveries for over a century before Cook is surprising. Every incentive seemed to be wanting among maritime nations at that time. All the regions offering immediate profit to the explorer had been discovered, commercial relations had

ABSENCE OF  
VOYAGES OF  
DISCOVERY FROM  
1648 TO 1764.