



CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY ARCTIC EXPLORERS.

The Northmen—John and Sebastian Cabot—Martin Frobisher—Davis—Henry Hudson—Baffin—Captain Phipps—Captain Cook—Mackenzie—Deshnew—Behring—Sir John Ross.

IF you examine a map of the Arctic regions, showing what was known of the countries around the North Pole in the commencement of the present century, you will find that nearly all within the Arctic Circle was a blank. The Icelanders and Northmen were the first Arctic explorers, but nothing is known of their discoveries except that they had found a land which they called Greenland. In 1497 John and Sebastian Cabot landed in Labrador, and afterward went as far north as $67^{\circ} 30'$ in search of a northwest passage to India. In 1576-78 Martin Frobisher made three voyages, discovering the entrance to Hudson and Frobisher Straits, leading into Hudson Bay.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, several learned men, including Sir Humphrey Gilbert, employed their pens in arguing the practicability of a Northwestern Passage. In his defence of such an attempt he spoke of a friar of Mexico who had actually performed the journey, but who, on telling it to the king of Portugal, had been forbidden to make it known lest it should reach the world. Whatever the facts of this case, some enthusiasm on the subject was the result, and Martin Frobisher spoke of it as *the* one thing "left undone."

But although he also persisted in his advocacy, it took fifteen years of perseverance and constant effort before he could find any one who would give him the assistance he needed. At last, when hope was nearly dead within him, Dudley, Earl of Warwick, came to the rescue, and aided him to fit out two small barques, thirty-five and thirty tons burden respectively. With these small craft, for such a voyage, he left the Thames. As he passed Greenwich Palace, on the 8th of June, 1576, Queen Elizabeth waved her farewell from a window. Briefly, they reached what is be-



NORSE SEA-KING.

lieved to have been the southern part of Greenland and Labrador, where they could not land because of the icy field surrounding the coast. Sailing to the northward, Frobisher met with a gigantic iceberg, which fell in pieces within their sight, making as much noise as though a high cliff had fallen into the sea. They saw a number of Esquimaux, and perhaps the description given



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

of them by the commander is as good as any ever given in few words: "They be like to Tartars, with long black hair, broad faces, and flatte noses, and taunie in colour, wearing seale skinnes; and so doe the women, not differing in the



SIR MARTIN FROBISHER.

fashion, but the women are marked in the face with blewe streekes downe the cheekes and round about the eyes." They came near the ship timidly, and after a while one of them ventured into the ship's boat, when Frobisher presented

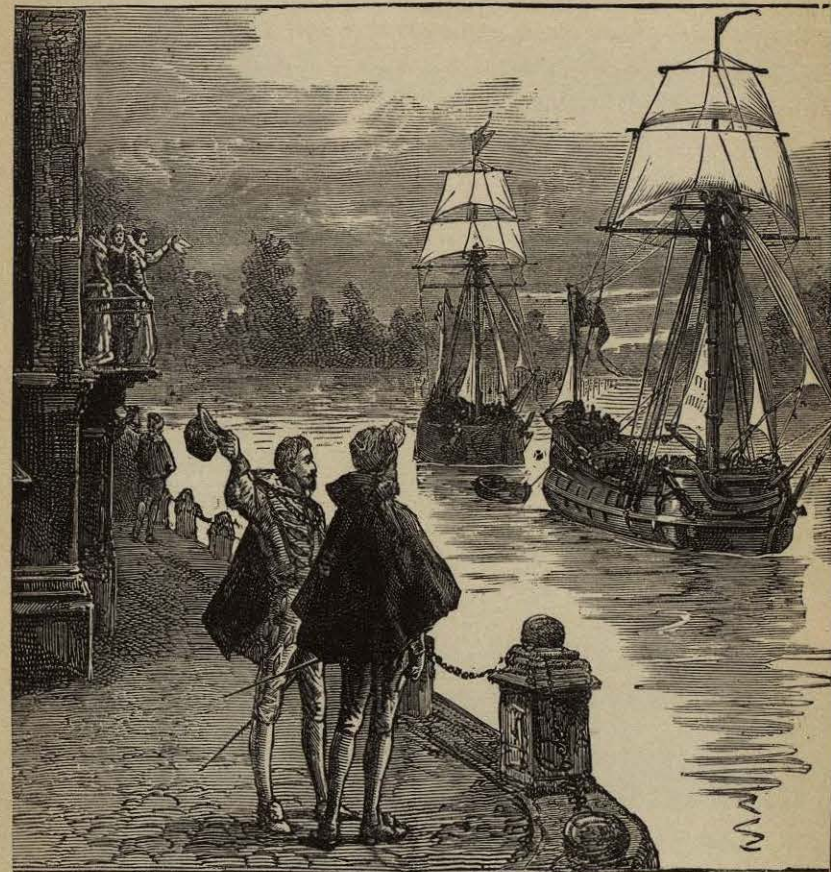
him with a bell and a knife, and sent him back with five of the crew. They were directed to land him apart from the spot where a number of his countrymen were assembled, but they disobeyed his orders, and were seized by the natives, together with the boat, and none of them were heard of more. Returning to the same spot a few days afterwards, one of the natives was enticed alongside the vessel, when Frobisher, a very powerful man, caught him fast, "and plucked him with maine force, boate and all, into his barke out of the sea. Whereupon, when he found himself in captivity, for very choler and disdaine he bit his tongue in twaine within his mouth; notwithstanding he died not thereof, but lived until he came to England, and then he died of cold which he had taken at sea." With this "strange infidele" Frobisher set sail for home, arriving at Harwich on October 2d.

The next voyage of Frobisher was instigated purely for the further discovery of the precious metal, reported by him to exist in large quantities on the east coast of Greenland. He was furnished with "one tall ship," of 180 tons or so, and two barques of about thirty tons each. On the way north they observed some enormous icebergs, more than half a mile in circuit, and seventy to eighty fathoms (210 to 240 yards) under water. The ice being perfectly fresh, Frobisher came to the conclusion that they "must be bredde in the sounds, or in some land neere the Pole." They loaded up with the ore from Hall's greater island, and on a small island in Frobisher Strait. "All the sands and cliffs did so glister, and had so bright a marquesite, that it seemed all to be gold, but upon tryall made it proved no better than black-lead."

On this expedition they had several altercations with the natives, and in one skirmish in York Sound killed five or six of them. It is said that they found here some of the apparel of their five unfortunate companions, who had been seized the previous year by the natives. By means of two captives they brought about some degree of intercourse with the Esquimaux, and left a letter, understanding that their own sailors were still alive, but they were never more seen. Having loaded with about two hundred tons of the supposed gold ore, they set sail for home, where they arrived safely, to the great delight of all. A "gold fever" spread, the cupidity of the heart was awakened; a dishonest man, who was an authority in such matters, and who, therefore, knew better, pronounced

the mica to be gold: the court, nobles, and merchants went crazy on the subject. It was determined that a third expedition should be despatched the following year (1578).

The fleet on this occasion consisted of no less than fifteen vessels. One hundred persons were taken to form a settlement, and remain there the complete year. Frobisher was appointed admiral and general. From first to last the voy-



FROBISHER PASSING GREENWICH.

age was disastrous. In the straits named after Frobisher, one of their larger barques struck so violently on a mass of ice that she sank in sight of the whole fleet, and although all the people on board were saved, a part of the house intended for the settlers went down with the wreck. A violent storm next ensued, which dispersed the fleet, some of the vessels being fixed in the ice of the strait, others being swept away to sea.

It was a severe season, and they were bewildered by fogs, snow, and mist. After many perils and much hardship, it was at length decided that each captain should load his ship with ore and set homewards. The fleet arrived in England on or about October 1st, having lost some forty persons. The ore being now carefully examined proved worthless pyrites; and the Arctic gold-mines seemed to have proved a "fizzle" as great as any of the worst which have succeeded them.

On the 7th of June, 1585, two vessels left Dartmouth in command of John Davis, and on the 19th of July were off the west coast of Greenland. As they proceeded northward, they observed "a rocky and mountainous land," its summit covered with snow, Davis naming it "The Land of Desolation." He could not land there, owing to the coast-ice, and after sundry explorations to the southward, and again to the northwestward, discovered an archipelago of islands, to which he gave the title of Gilbert Sound. After other explorations they reached a fine open passage (Cumberland Strait) between Frobisher's Archipelago and the island now called Cumberland Island. After a week's further stay they determined to sail for England, where they arrived safely on September 30th.

The second voyage of Davis had not been particularly prosperous either as regards commerce or discovery, but his persistency and perseverance induced the merchants to despatch a third expedition in 1587. On this voyage he proceeded as far north as 73° , and discovered the strait which now bears his name. Davis made no more Arctic voyages. He was afterwards employed in the East Indian service.

In the year 1594 the United Provinces determined to send out an expedition in the hopes of finding a northern route to China and India. The city of Amsterdam contributed two vessels: Zeelandt and Enkhuysen one each. Willem Barentz, "a notable, skillfull, and wise pilote," represented Amsterdam, while the other vessels were respectively commanded by Cornelis Cornelison and Brand Ysbrants. The vessels left the Texel on June 5th, and soon after separated. Following first the fortunes of Cornelison and Ysbrants, we find that they reached Lapland on the 23d, and proceeded eastward and reached Waigatz Island. Sailing through Waigatz Strait, they found and were impeded much by large quantities of floating ice; later they reached an open sea perfectly clear of it. The

land to the southward was in sight, and trended apparently to the southeast. Without more ado they concluded that they had discovered an open passage round Northern Asia to China, and turned their vessels' bows homewards. Meanwhile, Barentz crossed the White Sea, and eventually made the west coast of Nova Zembla; proceeding thence northwards, naming several headlands and islands. About latitude $77^{\circ} 25'$ they encountered an immense field of ice, of which they could

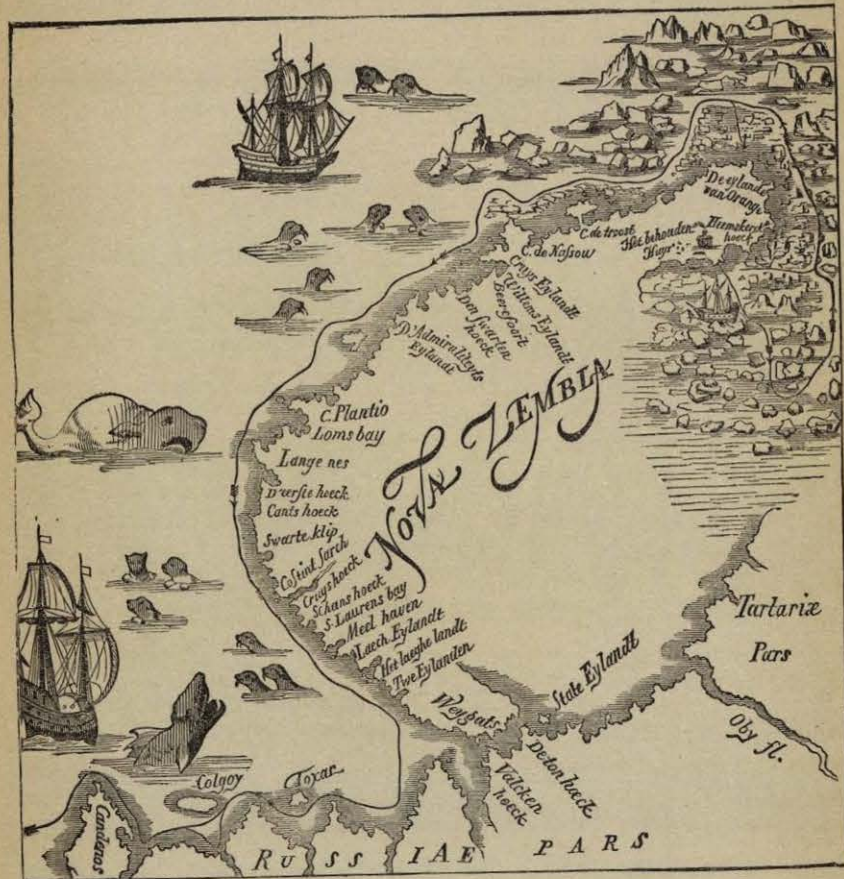


MOCK SUNS, SEEN ON FOURTH OF JUNE, 1596, BY BARENTZ.

see no end from the mast-head, and they had to turn back. After becoming entangled in drift-ice, and experiencing misty, cold, and tempestuous weather, the crew began to murmur, and then refused positively to proceed. On the homeward voyage, after they had arrived at Maltfloe and Delgoy Islands, they met the other ships, the commanders of which were jubilant with the idea that they had discovered the Northeast Passage. At all events, on their return, the reports given by

them were so favorably considered, that preparations were immediately made for a second expedition.

The second expedition consisted of seven vessels: six laden with wares, merchandise, and money, and factors to act as traders; the seventh, a small pinnace, was to accompany the rest for part of the voyage, and bring back news of the proceedings. These extensive preparations were rendered



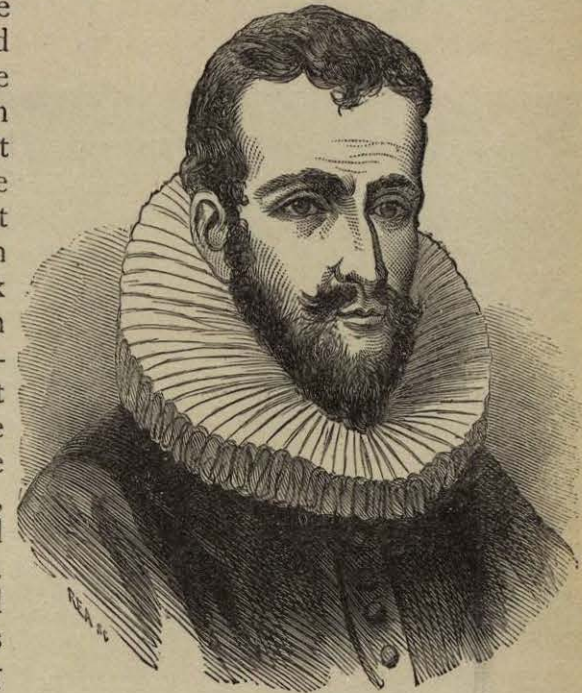
NOVA ZEMBLA—ROUTE TAKEN BY BARENTZ.

nearly useless by the dilatoriness of those who had the matter in hand. The vessels did not leave the Texel till July 2d, 1595, nor reach Nova Zembla before the middle of August. The coasts of that island were found to be unapproachable on account of the ice. In few words, they returned to Holland, having accomplished little or nothing.

Again, in May, 1596, Barentz sailed from Amsterdam, and

on July 17th reached Nova Zembla. Arrived home in the following year, after a voyage of many hardships and trials.

In 1607 renewed the search for a northern route to China and Japan. Hitherto neither the northeast nor northwest had held out much hopes of success, and they now determined on a bold and novel attempt at sailing over the Pole itself. For this expedition Henry Hudson—already known as an experienced and intrepid seaman, and well skilled in nautical science—was chosen commander. This adventurous navigator left Gravesend on May 1st in a small barque, with only ten men and a boy. The



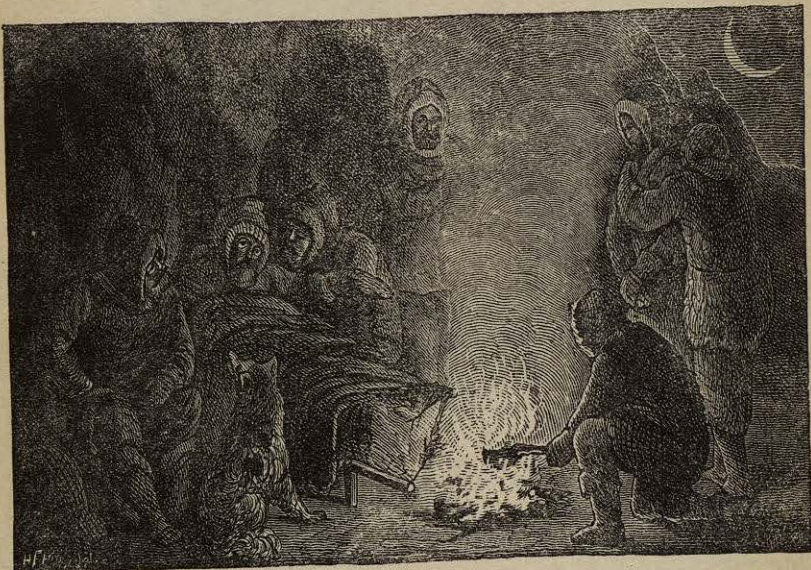
SIR HENRY HUDSON.

very name and tonnage of the vessel have been forgotten, but it is known to have been of the tiniest description. In the second week of June Hudson fell in with land—a headland of East Greenland—the weather at the time being foggy, and the sails and shrouds frozen. He examined other parts of this coast, feeling doubtful whether he might not reach open water to the northward, and sail round Greenland. Later he reached Spitzbergen, where the ice to the north utterly baffled all his efforts to force a passage, and being short of supplies he set sail for England.

Two years later, 1609, we find Hudson on a third voyage of discovery. His movements were very erratic, and the only record left us does not explain them. He first doubled the North Cape, as though again in quest of the Northeast Passage; then turned westward to Newfoundland; thence again south as far as Charleston, South Carolina; then north to Cape Cod, soon after which he discovered the beau-

tiful Hudson River, at the mouth of which New York is now situated. Hudson's fourth and last voyage is that most intimately associated with his name on account of the cruel tragedy which terminated his life.

Several gentlemen of influence, among them Sir John Wolstenholme and Sir Dudley Digges, were so satisfied of the feasibility of making the Northwest Passage, that they fitted out a vessel at their own expense, and gave the command to Henry Hudson. The accounts of the voyage itself are meagre. We know, however, that he discovered the Strait and "Mediterranean" Sea. The vessel appropriated for this service was of fifty-five tons burden, victualled only, as



DEATH OF BEHRING.

it seems, for six months. She left the Thames on April 17th, 1610, and on June 9th she was off the entrance of Frobisher Strait, where Hudson was compelled to ply to the westward on account of the ice and contrary winds. During July and the latter part of August several islands and headlands were sighted and named, and at length they discovered a great strait formed by the northwest point of Labrador, and a cluster of islands, which led them into an extensive sea. Here Hudson's own testimony ends.

In 1616 Baffin explored the bay called after him, even entering the mouth of Lancaster Sound. For more than fifty years after his explorations no navigator penetrated be-

yond the spot reached by him. In 1743 the British Parliament offered a reward of £20,000 to the crew who should effect a northwest passage through Hudson Bay, and subsequently the conditions were extended so as to include any northern passage for ships, and an additional reward of £5,000 was offered to the crew that should penetrate to within one degree of the North Pole. In 1773 Captain Phipps, afterward Lord Mulgrave, under instructions to reach the North Pole, sailed along the shores of Spitzbergen to latitude $80^{\circ} 48'$, and in 1776 Captain Cook, sailing for the polar sea by way of Behring Strait, penetrated to latitude $70^{\circ} 45'$. In 1789 Mackenzie, in a land expedition, discovered and traced to its mouth the river called after him.

In spite of all these discoveries not a single line of the coast from Icy Cape to Baffin Bay was traced and thoroughly known. The eastern and western shores of Greenland to about 75° latitude were tolerably well defined from the visits of whaling vessels; Hudson Bay and Strait were partially known; but Baffin Bay, according to the statement of the discoverer, was bounded by land on the west, running parallel with the 90th meridian, and across what is now known as Barrow's Strait.

As early as the year 1527 the idea of a passage to the East Indies by the North Pole was suggested by a Bristol merchant to Henry VIII. of England, but no voyage seems to have been undertaken for the purpose of navigating the Arctic Seas till the commencement of the following century, when an expedition was fitted out at the expense of several merchants of London. This attempt was succeeded by others at different periods, and all of them were projected and carried out by private individuals. While the adventurers did not reach India by a nearer route than doubling the Cape of Good Hope, they evinced a fortitude, perseverance, and skill which deserve the admiration of the civilized world.

At length, after the lapse of above a century and a half, this interesting question became an object of royal patronage, and the expedition which was commanded by Captain Phipps was fitted out at the expense of the government. Captain Phipps, however, found it impossible to penetrate the wall of ice which extended for many degrees between the latitude of 80° and 81° to the north of Spitzbergen. His vessels were the Racehorse and Carcass: Captain Lutwidge being his

second in command, in the latter vessel, and having with him, then a mere boy, Nelson, the future hero of England.

From the year 1648, when the famous Russian navigator, Deshnew, penetrated from the river Kolyma through the Polar into the Pacific Ocean, the Russians have been as arduous in their attempts to discover a northeast passage to the north of Cape Shelatskoi, as the English have been to sail to the northwest of the American continent, through Baffin Bay and Lancaster Sound. On the side of the Pacific many efforts have, within the last century, been made to further this object. In 1741 the celebrated Captain Behring discovered the straits which bear his name. From the period when Deshnew sailed on his expedition to the year 1764, when Admiral Tchitschagoff, an indefatigable and active officer, endeavored to force a passage round Spitzbergen, and thence to the present times, including the arduous efforts of Captain Billings and Vancouver, and the more recent one of M. Von Wrangell, the Russians have been untiring in their attempts to discover a passage eastward to the north of Cape Taimur and Cape Shelatskoi. And certainly, if skill, perseverance, and courage could have opened this passage, it would have been accomplished.

An expedition was despatched under the command of Sir John Ross in order to explore the scene of the former labors of Frobisher and Baffin. Still haunted with the golden dreams of a northwest passage, which Barrington and Beaufoy had in the last age so enthusiastically advocated, our nautical adventurers by no means relinquished the long-cherished chimera.

A thorough knowledge of the relative boundaries of land and ocean on our globe has in all ages and by all countries been considered one of the most important features of popular information. But to no country is this knowledge of such practical utility and such importance as to a maritime nation like Great Britain, whose merchant marine visits every port which is dependent upon distant quarters for the greater part of her necessary supplies, whether of food or of luxuries, which her population consume, and which her arts and manufactures require.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Sir John Ross—Captain Parry—Sir John Franklin—Russian Expeditions under Von Wrangell and Anjou—Captain Beechey—Captain Ross fixes the Position of the true Magnetic Pole—Back and Dr. King—Dease and Simpson—Dr. Rae finishes the Geographical Exploration of the North Coast of the American Continent—Sir John Franklin's last Expedition—Numerous Expeditions sent out in Search of him—Captain McClintock finds Proof of Franklin's Death—Commander Inglewood's Expedition—Sir John Franklin the Discoverer of the Northwestern Passage.

In the year 1818 two vessels were fitted out by the British government to proceed toward the North Pole. Captain Sir John Ross and Lieutenant Parry were appointed commanders. No former expedition had been fitted out on so extensive a scale, or so completely equipped in every respect as this one. The circumstance which stimulated the sending out of these vessels was the open character of the bays and seas in those regions, very large quantities of the polar ice having floated down into the Atlantic for the previous three years. This expedition had instructions to discover the northwest passage. Another, under Captain Beechey and Lieutenant Franklin, afterward Sir John Franklin, was to penetrate to the North Pole. The objects of the latter expedition were entirely scientific. It passed north between Greenland and Spitzbergen, but did not go farther than latitude $80^{\circ} 34'$. Captain Ross sailed about sixty miles up Lancaster Sound, and returned with the report that it was a bay, through which there was no outlet to the ocean beyond. A year later another expedition under Lieutenant Parry passed through Lancaster and Melville Sounds beyond the 110th meridian, wintered at Melville Island, and returned to Great Britain the next summer. From York Factory an overland expedition under Lieutenant Franklin was sent out the same year, with instructions to explore the north coast of America, from the mouth of the Coppermine River eastward. He proceeded 550 miles east of the Coppermine to Point Turn-again, and then, having suffered great hardships, re-