

CHAPTER XXXI

THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA

Frobisher and the Short-cut to China. — So anxious were the nations of Europe to find a short route to China that English sailors also entered into the search. Among those who set out to find a northwest passage through North America was Martin Frobisher. The man who found this short-cut, Frobisher thought, would become both rich and famous, for he believed it was the only great thing in the world left to do.

His Voyage. — Frobisher was too poor to fit out an expedition himself, and it was a long time before he could find a wealthy or powerful friend to aid him. At last the friend was found; and as Frobisher sailed down the Thames with three little ships (1576), Queen Elizabeth waved a friendly farewell. One of the vessels went down in a storm at sea while the crew of another became frightened and turned their prows toward home. But Frobisher sailed fearlessly on. He landed somewhere north of Labrador, and took possession of the country for Elizabeth. In spite of his perseverance, Frobisher failed to find the passage to China. He carried home an Indian and some worthless stones which he believed to contain gold; but his voyage was a failure.

Drake Sailing Around the World. — Meanwhile Francis Drake (1577-1580) sailed around the end of South America and up along the west coast, plundering Spanish settlements and taking their ships laden with immense treasure.