

through the Northern Ocean, the Dutch being foremost in this attempt. In the year 1596, two ships were, for this purpose, sent north from the port of Amsterdam.

Of these two vessels, one was commanded by Captain Jacob Hemskerk with Wilhem Barendz for his first mate, and the other by Cornelius Ryp, Barendz and Ryp having formerly sailed far up into the Arctic Ocean.

In the hope of great commercial success, both vessels carried large cargoes, which the city of Amsterdam permitted to be taken free of toll or dues of any kind. The sailors were promised high wages, and with all on board full of hopeful expectation, the good ships weighed anchor, under a favourable breeze, on May 10th, 1596.

One slight mishap, which occurred at the commencement of the voyage, might have been considered a bad omen—on the first day Ryp's vessel struck upon a sand-bank, where it remained fixed for several days, but as soon as it was extricated the two ships sailed rapidly north, finding themselves towards the end of the month at 64 north latitude.

On the first of July they saw, for the first time, the sun remaining motionless on the horizon. Our young readers have doubtless learned at school the cause of this phenomenon, and why it is that in the far north